THE HINDOO PATRIOT

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MOFUSSIL..... 13-8.

Summary of News.

Monday, 9th February.

Truth says.—"I learn that the Emperor William's plan of volunteeing a visit to England every year is by no means relished by his exalted relatives in this country. It was quite troublesome enough for the Emperor to come to Osborne for a week; but the nuisance threatens to be considerably exaggerated, inasmuch as his Majesty appears to be longing for more splendour and excitement than can be found on the Solent, for he has just expressed a wish to come over this year early in June, as he desires to attend Ascot races. The Emperor's arrival in June, would involve his being entertained by the Queen at Buckingham Palace, and as nothing would induce Her Majesty to allow the old Ascot state to be revived, either he would have to "do" races from London, or else the Prince of Wales must entertain him, and H. R. H. has now lost his billet at Sunningdale Park, by the death of Sir James Mackenzie. The Queen was once willing to allow the Prince and Princess to reside at Windsor Castle during Ascot Week, on condition that no dancing or gambling was permitted during their sojourn under her roof: and she also stipulated that the list of their guests should be submitted to her for approval. If the Emperor comes for Ascot, the Queen had better request the Prince of Wales to entertain him at Windsor Castle on her behalf.'

A GROSS case of Police Oppression.—The *Morning Post* says:—'A most villainous instance of extorting confession under threats and intimidation by some native policemen of the district force is at present pending in the court of Mr. P. Cray, Joint-Magistrate of Allahabad. From the evidence already recorded, it appears that some time in September last, the Sirsawan police discovered the body of an infant in a tank; and investigation followed, in the course of which a woman, named Godhni, of the Thakur caste was suspected of having given birth to the deceased infant, and made away with it. The unfortunate woman was apprehended and made to undergo an examination by no fewer than a score of village midwives, who were divided in their opinion as to her maternity. The woman was, however, detained for a considerable time by the police who, it is alleged, used threats towards her, and intimidated her by saying that if she did not confess to the child found being hers, she would be operated on by a medical man to arrive at the truth. As a result, the unfortunate woman made the required confession, and was committed for trial before Mr. Allen, Assistant Magistrate of Allahabad, under section 318, C. P. Code, for concealment of birth. The Assistant Magistrate on the evidence adduced for the prosecution, sentenced the woman to suffer three months imprisonment. She had been in prison about a month, when the authorities discovered that she was *enceinte*, and on a representation of this fact she was discharged, and an enquiry into the whole matter ordered. The result was that five Native Policemen of various grades who were concerned in the enquiry and committal of the woman have been charged under various sections of the C. P. Code, and are on their trial for extorting confession. The unfortunate woman, some eight days after her release, was delivered of a child.

THE prospects of any Silver Bill passing during the current Congress are virtually at an end. Mr. Goschen's scheme for an issue of ten shilling notes is believed to be doomed. The rumours of Chinese Silver loan for seven millions have been revived in the *Times* but any present effect from this is improbable. The immediate prospects of exchange depend therefore mainly upon some possible revival of the Indian export trade. Anticipations point to a gradual fall of rates after the close of March to below one and five-pence, and a little recovery during the six subsequent months.

IN the House of Commons Sir Roper Lethbridge gave notice of a motion that it was desirable to have free discussion on Indian affairs at least every session and also to amend the standing orders so as to permit of the debate on the Indian Budget being brought on before the Speaker leaves the chair.

Tuesday, 10th February.

MR. R. G. MACDONALD, Deputy Accountant General Under-Secretary to the Government of India in the Public Works Department, has been granted furlough for seven months.

A SPECIAL grant of some ten lakhs is likely to be made this year to the Commissariat Department to complete the arrangements for mobilisation. This sum will allow a full reserve of clothing to be formed.

THEIR Imperial Highnesses the Grand Dukes Alexis and Sergius, brothers of the Emperor of Russia, have completed their yachting tour to Batavia, Java and Singapur, and returned to Ceylon, where, after an elephant hunting expedition in the south of the island, they will proceed to Colombo, to await the arrival of the Cesarewitch. When the Cesarewitch leaves for the far East, the Princes pay a visit to Madras, and then to Calcutta, but it is not yet decided whether they will come on in the yacht or make the long journey by rail.

THE *Dublin Express* says that the so-called understanding between Mr. Parnell and Messrs. O'Brien, Dillon, and Macarthy is simply an agreement to respect the *status quo* until the next General Election.

TWO German newspaper editors have been sentenced to three months' and six weeks' imprisonment respectively, for a gross insulting libel concerning the officers of a Uhlan regiment.

IT seems impossible to say what currency policy will eventually prevail in America. The promoters of the Silver Bill are discredited to a certain extent by disclosures reflecting on the honesty of Senators.

LORD GREVILLE has been bitten by a dog, and has gone to M. Pasteur for treatment.

THE St. Petersburgh correspondent of the *Times* telegraphs that the administrative oppression from which the Jewish population in Russia has suffered for some time past is now being felt by the Mussulmans. An instance is furnished by the action of the Limernoff official, of the press censorship, who has recently ordered the expunging of thirteen verses of the Koran. This hitherto unprecedented blow dealt at the sacred book of the Mussulmans has, it is stated, caused a deep feeling in the minds of the followers of Mahomed in the Kirghis steppes and Russia's Central Asiatic possessions. In Russia Mahomedan preachers are at the present moment preaching fiery sermons against this proceeding of the Russian authorities.

THE *Times* announces a literary discovery which is almost unprecedented in the whole history of Classical learning. It seems that the British Museum recently acquired from a source not specified a bundle of Papyrus rolls found in Egypt. The rolls on being examined by the Museum experts were found to contain a text hitherto unknown, except in detached fragments, of the treatise on the Athenian constitution, ascribed to Aristotle. The Museum is about to publish a facsimile.

THE Maharaja of Kashmir and his brother, Raja Ram Singh both asked to be allowed to serve with the Black Mountain Expedition, and the Maharajah and the State Council were anxious that the State troops should also be given a chance of active service. The Government of India, however, while cordially acknowledging the spirit that dictated the offers, replied "that the expedition which is about to be sent across the frontier is only a small affair, that the constitution of the force has been carefully considered and finally decided, and that consequently the Viceroy has to decline the services of the Kashmir troops on this occasion." This answer will be a source of disappointment, and it is, perhaps, a pity that opportunity could not be given to the most important of the frontier States to practically exhibit its readiness and ability to assist the Government in the work of frontier defence.

DURING the past year, judging from the statement laid before the annual meeting, the Woman's Friendly Society is doing excellent work, while at the same time its sphere of operations is extending. Lady Lansdowne, by her presence at the meeting, showed the ready help she is willing to extend to undertakings of this nature. To Mrs. Pugh, the Honorary Secretary, the chief credit is due, and she has been ably assisted by the members of the Committee.

Wednesday, 11th February.

BARON HIRSCH has given half a million sterling to the promotion of the emigration of the Jews to America.

THE salary of each Judicial Commissioner of Oudh will be fixed at Rs. 3,500 monthly.

THE Committee of the Indian Association have passed the following resolution, anent the death of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, at their meeting on the 6th instant:—"That this meeting desires to place on record its sense of profound sorrow at the death of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, whose disinterested services to the people of India enshrine his memory in their grateful recollection. The Committee hereby resolve to promote any public movement that may be set, on foot to do honor to his memory."

A MANIFESTO has been issued by Sir John Macdonald the Premier, to the Canadian people, in which he warmly combats unrestricted reciprocity with the United States, which, he says, would result in a discrimination against England and the annexation of Canada to the United States. He, therefore, urges the necessity of upholding the allegiance to the Crown and the unity of the Empire, and of preserving Canada's commercial and political freedom.

PROFESSOR Huxley tells the following story as illustrative of ill-regulated enthusiam:—'When I was attending the meeting of the British Association in Belfast nearly forty years ago, I had promised to break-fast with the eminent scholar, Dr. Hincks. Having been up very late the previous night I was behind time; so, hailing an out side car, I said to the driver, as I jumped in, "Now drive fast, I am in a hurry." Whereupon he whipped up his horse and set off at a hard gallop. Nearly jerked off my seat I shouted, "My good friend, do you know where I want to go?" "No, yer honner," said the driver, "but, any way, I am driving fast." I have never forgotten this subject lesson in the danger of ill-regulated enthusiasm."

H. H. the Maharaja Holkar has determined to push on reforms in different departments of his State, and assisted by his newly-appointed Minister, Mr. M. C. Bedarkar, has begun with the Indore account department. It is said that some of the old Durbarees having been called upon to give an account of their stewardship, find much difficulty in accounting for the large sums of money which have been passing through their hands. The consternation in some quarters is said to be great at this unexpected descent on their respective departments. His Highness has requested the Government of India to lend him the services of Pandit Bisessur Nath, of Nagpore, to assist him in unravelling the tangled accounts of the different departments now under investigation.

MR. H. BEVERIDGE, Additional District and Sessions Judge, 24 Pergunnahs and Hughli, is allowed furlough for nine months, with effect from the date on which he may avail himself of it. Mr. M. R. F. Rampini District and Sessions Judge, Burdwan, is appointed to act as additional District and Sessions Judge, 24 Pergunnahs and Hughli, during the absence, on furlough, of Mr. H. Beveridge.

THE Egyptian Government has decided to take steps to drive out the dervishes from Tokar. The Governor of Suakin has, therefore, been ordered to proceed immediately with all his available forces to that place and to expel the dervishes. He will then fortify the town and constitute a Civil Government there. No British troops are to be employed in the expedition.

THE Palghat Vaidic Mahajana meeting of the 2nd February adopted the Trichur protest against the Scoble Bill, and telegraphed to the India Government about the unjust attack on the religious and social observances, encouraging vice in every shape.

A large meeting of Hindus and Mahommedans of Serampore was held on Sunday before last to protest against the Age of Consent Bill. More than one thousand persons, including renowned Pandits, were present. Mohamohopadhya Taragati Nyaratna presided. It was unanimously resolved to memorialize Government to abandon the Bill as infringing religious customs.

Thursday, 12th February

BABU KAILAS CHUNDER MUKERJI, L. M. S., writes an important letter in which he says:—'I and my Hughly friend, Babu Romesh Chunder Mundle, Zemindar and Vice-President of the Chinsura Well-wishing Association, called a meeting to discuss the adivsibility of raising the age of consent. The meeting was largely attended by Zemindars, Pleaders, Municipal Commissioners, Honorary Magistrates, Doctors, Kabirajes, Tradesmen, and the influential gentry of the place. Some Mahomedans also attended the meeting. The proposal to condemn the Bill was unanimously carried. I take this opportunity of making known to the public my own opinion with regard to the medical aspect of the question. Out of 223 cases of labour that I had been called upon to attend, only 13 girls were below the age of 14, and only one girl was of the age of 12. Of these, four only conceived for the first time after the age of 25; and these were the cases most difficult to deal with. In this connection I want to lay stress on two facts; firstly, that the cruelty to child-wives is very rare, and, secondly that females rarely conceive for the first time, after the age of 25 in this country. With regard to cruelty to child-wives, during the whole range of my experience, I came across only a single case about 4 years ago. A low-caste girl of 11 was cruelly treated by her husband and I was called in for treatment. I wrote to Dr. Joubert, the then Civil Surgeon of our District, asking his opinion in the matter. He declined to interfere on the ground that the age of the girl was above 10 years. The girl is quite well even at the present day."

THE *Advocate*, of Lucknow, not itself a less zealous advocate of reform, thus writes on the Age of Consent Bill:—"Nothing impresses us more with the short-sightedness and perverseness of the course about to be taken than the fact that the gain from this measure will be so very little and the loss so great and yet there are intelligent people pressing for it. In the heat of the excitement, the one party is representing that the Bill when it becomes an Act will prove to be an unmixed blessing and the other party as enthusiastically maintaining that it will be an unmitigated and undiluted curse. Impartially speaking, truth does not lie in either of these extreme statements, but rather somewhere between the two,—and our honest opinion is nearer those that anticipate mischief and misery from the measure." The question simply is how will the present measure affect our religious and social institutions. If it can be shown beyond the shadow of a doubt that the proposed law will prove injurious to the institutions it should certainly be abandoned.

A PUBLIC meeting of the British Indian subjects residing in Cuch Behar, was held on the parade-grounds on Sunday, the 25th January last, to consider the Bill. The meeting was densely crowded. It was thought "that the Bill, if passed into law, would interfere with the religious and social customs of her Majesty's Indian subjects."

THE Anjuman Rifah-i-Aum, of Oudh, has resolved that as the Age of Consent Bill is calculated to seriously interfere with the domestic concerns of the people, Government be requested to withdraw the Bill altogether. If, however, Government insist on passing the measure, due provision be made that no prosecutions are undertaken in any case unless the injured girls or their natural guardians are complainants; further, that punishment should in no case exceed two years' imprisonment.

A MEETING was held at Kolomal, Tumluk, under the presidency of Pundit Kally Nath Tarkasidhanta to protest against the Consent Bill. Several Mahomedans also attended. Resolutions, condemning the Bill, were passed.

A "HINDU GRADUATE" writes to us from Nagpore to say:—"I am very happy to inform you that a large meeting was held in the Rukhmni Gardens presided over by Pandit Bhattaji Shastri. Many Pandits and Shastris and other eminent persons were present. It was proved by the learned men present that the *Shastras* strictly enjoin the performance of the *Garbhadhan* rites on the first occurrence of the well-known condition, and the non-performance of the ceremony is considered to be a great sin. It was resolved that the Bill, if passed, would interfere with the Hindu religion and would violate the promise contained in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858."

A CROWDED meeting of the inhabitants of Gangatiya, Gobindapore, Jogdal, Lakhusati, and Ponan, was held at Gangatiya on Monday afternoon. Babu Dina Nath Chuckerbutty Chowdhry, Zemindar and Honorary Magistrate, presiding, to protest against the Consent Bill, and it was unanimously resolved that the meeting considered that this Bill interfered with the religious rites and social customs of the Hindus." tSir Romesh Chunder Mitter was thanked. Government is to be memoralised to withdraw the Bill.

Friday, 13th February

THE British Indian Association of Oudh has, we understand, declared itself against the Consent Bill. Mr. Ather Ali, the legal adviser of the Association, has written a long Minute on the subject, strongly opposing the Bill on practical grounds.

THE *Tribune* thus represents the opinion of the Punjab on the Scoble Bill. In speaking of the meeting that took place in the Baoli Saheb, Lahore, it says:—"Among the Hindus there are supporters of the measure no doubt, but their number is very small, and they are, generally speaking, those who cannot be regarded as representatives of any society. It was given out that the Aroras had in a meeting supported the Bill and we showed in a recent issue what sort of meeting that was. The supporters of the Bill have to cast about far and near for friends, and we were not surprised to see the *Indian Spectator* of Bombay making capital out of the support of the Aroras, and invoking blessings on the head of the "brave Arorbansis of Lahore," At the Baoli Saheb meeting, when a representative Arora gentleman got up and asked his assembled caste-fellows as to how they regarded the attitude of those Aroras who had declared in favour of the Bill, with one voice it was declared that such Aroras represented only themselves and the great body of the Aroras would have nothing to do with them. In the Punjab there are only two vernacular papers that are in favor, and they are conducted by gentlemen of the "reformed" type. In face of this genuine opposition of the people, if the Government persists in passing the Bill in its present form it will act most ill-advisedly. The discontenment of the masses is no child's play. We repeat that the opposition is genuine and spontaneous and never was so much feeling evoked on any other subject."

A CORRESPONDENT writes from Delhi:—"A meeting of *Varnashram Dharma Vardhini Sabha* of Delhi was held on the evening of the 1st instant in the Dharmasala of Rai Bahadur Ram Krishna Das. Speeches were made by some leading Pandits of the city. It was proved by texts from the *Shastras* and the Vedas that early-marriage was condemned in them. Efforts, they said, have steadily been made by the Hindus to raise the marriageable age of girls and many works have been published to point out the evils of early marriage. But the Government had recently interfered in the matter which concerned the domestic life of the people and therefore memorials of protest were sent from many quarters. Pandit Banke Lal Goswami, then moved a Resolution that a memorial be sent to the Government deprecating Government interference. The Government might wait for some time and if the Hindus did not raise the marriage age of girls themselves then it would be justified in interfering. And if the Covernment was resolved to pass the Bill then no age limit should be fixed but the time of puberty, the signs of which were unmistakable. The Resolution about the memorial was seconded by Pandit Kashi Nath Shastri and unanimously carried." This clearly shows that those who say that only the most begotted people are opposed to the Bill do not state the truth. It is not only the ignorant and the orthodox but almost all men of light and leading—in Bengal as in Behar, in the N. W. Provinces as in the Punjab—are opposed to the measure.

THE learned Shastris of Puna held a meeting of their body, and unanimously declared that the Bill, if passed, would interfere with Hindu religion, because the change in law would make necessary the performance of a religious *sanskar* penal in cases of earlier maturity,

THE Army Estimates for the coming year amount to seventeen and half million sterling, being a decrease of two hundred and ninety thousand pounds.

AT the Bombay Criminal Sessions, at the trial of Cassum Sajan, the collapse of whose house in Jambli Street resulted in the death of thirty persons on the 17th of December last, the Jury by a majority of six to three, found the prisoner guilty on the charge of causing death by doing a rash and negligent act. The prisoner begged that he should be fined and not sent to jail. Considering that the jury were not unanimous, that he himself had doubts as to whether the trenches did not contribute to the fall of the house, and considering that the prisoner was an old man, his Lordship was of opinion that the ends of justice would be satisfied if he sentenced the prisoner to two months' simple imprisonment.

MR. GOSCHEN has resolved not to press for a Gold Coinage Bill until he has decided regarding the expediency of linking the withdrawal of light gold with further proposals relating to currency.

A DEPUTATION from some of the leading mercantile firms in Calcutta waited on Sir Charles Elliott at Belvedere on Tuesday with reference to certain points in connection with the new rules regarding inland steamers and survey of those vessels which have lately been introduced by the Bengal Marine Department.

Saturday, 14th February.

SAYS the *Indian Spectator*:—"There is one suggestion which we should like to make to the Government. Ever since the Ilbert Bill agitation, our people have come to believe that there is some magic in public meetings and public demonstrations; and when, therefore, they cannot get up real *public* meetings and demonstrations, they magnify their little make-believes, and send spicy telegrams to the newspapers. There are few publicists who are not aware that this trick is often resorted to. We, therefore, ask Government to notify that, in future, no representation will be attended to unless the names and callings of the persons attending such meetings are given." Strange that the light should not have dawned upon the editor earlier! The notification our contemporary recommends will not help him in any way. The names and callings when given will show that dis-approval of the Consent Bill proceeds from representatives of all sections of our society.

ON the occasion of the Magh Sankranti *Tula* ceremony of the mother of Maharajah Bahadur, Sir Jotendro Mohun Tagore, K. C. S. I., the *Raj-mata* was weighed on Wednesday, at the Pathuriaghata Rajbati against one maund and thirteen seers in silver rupee coin, valued between four and five thousand rupees, and all this amount has been distributed amongst Pandits and Brahmins.

THE resolution on the working of Post Offices published in the *Gazette of India* observes that as in the past year the operations during 1889-90 show steady progress. The more important events during the year were:—

(1) Conclusion of arrangements for direct Parcel exchanges with Egypt and South Australia.
(2) Reduction in the rates of Parcel postage for Ceylon, Malta, and Gibraltar.
(3) Alteration of the day and hour of departure of the homeward mails from Bombay to Friday at 5 P. M. during the monsoon, and Saturday at 2 P. M. during the rest of the year.
4. The amalgamation of the Local Post in Mysore (called the *Anche*) with the Imperial Post.
(5) The reduction in the yearly and the maximum limits for deposits in the Savings Banks.
(6) The extension of the Revenue Money Order system, experimentally and to limited extent, to Madras and the Punjab.
(7) The extension of the system of Insurance to Postal Parcels exchanged between India and the United Kingdom.

THE number of Postal articles including Money Orders actually delivered during the year was 303,422,411, being 98·26 per cent of the total number sent out for delivery. The percentage of deliveries in 1888-89 was 97·17. For the first time since the opening of the Post Office Savings Bank the deposits in the year and the closing blance decreased as compared with the previous year, and the withdrawals exceeded the deposits. This was due to the reduction from 1st April 1889 of the maximum limit for the balance of a Savings Bank account from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 2,000 and of that for deposits made in a year from Rs. 500 to Rs. 200.

THE Cossipur Flower Show, which was opened on Friday last, was the occasion of drawing out Sir Edward Buck as to the agricultural policy of Government. Sir Edward observed:—

"The question has often been asked me what the Agricultural Departments which were founded a few years ago in the various provinces, including Bengal, have been doing for the improvement of agriculture. I have always been obliged to answer—Little or nothing. Fortunately it has been possible to show that by the performance of other duties which have been committed to them, these departments have, as publicly announced by the Finance Minister a year or two ago, earned for the State a profit to several lakhs a year. But they have made no money out of agicultural farms, nor have they, for what I hope will be considered very good reasons, been urged by Government to spend much money upon agricultural experiments and model farms. The three principal reasons why public money has not been thus expended are these: In the first place agricultural experiments are expensive as I am afraid the President of the Cossipore Society has found out. In the second place they require a great deal of intimate knowledge of the agricultural conditions of the country which only the cultivating classes possess; but, and this is the third and most important reason, the cultivating classes are not at present sufficiently educated to take up either the trial of experiments themselves or to accept the results obtained by others. Whatever, therefore, might be the results obtained on Government farms any large expenditure incurred on them would be rightly objected to by the tax-payers of the country.

Our own idea as always has been that the Agricultural Department of the Government and the elaborate and scientific agricultural appliances that we are accustomed to hear so much belauded, are after all no good. Sir Edward has the good sense to make this frank confession, though somewhat late in the day.

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The Hindoo Patriot.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1891.

THE COUNTESS OF DUFFERIN FUND.

THE annual meeting of the National Association for Supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India, was held, under the presidency of His Excellency the Viceroy, at the Town Hall, on Monday last. There was a very large gathering of European and Native gentlemen on the occasion. Among the speakers of the evening were Dr. Mahendralal Sircar, the Hon'ble Justice Amir Ali, the Hon'ble Sir Comer Petheram, the Hon'ble Justice Chandra Madhab Ghosh, the Hon'ble Prince Mahomed Ferokh Shah, Sir Charles Elliott and the Maharaja of Bettiah. The Hon'ble Sir Andrew Scoble presented the sixth Report of the Fund, and in doing so, he drew the attention of his hearers to its leading features. He showed, by facts and figures, that the National Association is making steady progress. He pointed out that the two main objects which the Association had always kept in view were medical relief and medical tuition. In regard to both these objects Sir Andrew was able to say that the Report shows that a very great advance over the previous year had been effected in 1890. The medical tuition of women is devided into three classes:—(1) Lady Doctors; (2) Hospital Assistants; (3 Nurses and Midwives. There are now 13 Lady Doctors practising in the hospitals of the Association. Of this class the Association can obtain as many more as it wants; but Sir Andrew just remarked that the means at its disposal do not justify the employment of such expensive machinery save at important centres. There are 27 young women of the Hospital class now working under the Association, and regarding them, Sir Andrew said that they have had signal success, and are a credit to the institutions in which they had received their education. He appealed to the Native friends and supporters of the Association to help it by inducing a better class of women to qualify as hospital assistants, and as nurses and midwives. The Association has already invested 12 lakhs in buildings, and the work of buildings, we are glad to learn, promises to go on briskly during the present year. As regards medical relief we are glad to notice that last year nearly half-a-million female patients received medical aid at the hands of the Association. Well did Sir Andrew Scoble say that the hospitals conducted by employes of the Association have conferred great benefits not only on women but on children also. Turning to the financial position of the Association, he pointed out that it was a substantial and sound one. The parent Society has a funded capital of six lakhs which gives the Association an annual income of Rs. 27,000. Sir Andrew spoke nothing but the truth when he said that the Association could find good employment for a hundred times that money, and he hoped that this would enable it to have a larger income from interest. We heartily share in this hope and trust that it will be speedily realised.

Dr. Mahendralal Sircar, in moving the adoption of the report, dwelt at length on the advantages of the institution. He justly remarked that the report was more than satisfactory, and that the Association, instead of suffering from the departure from the country of its founder, had made immense strides under the able and sympathetic guidance of the present illustrious Lady President—Her Excellency the Marchioness of Lansdowne. The learned Doctor, however, went out of his way to condemn what he called "the tyranny of the degrading custom of child-marriage," which had not even been so much as mentioned in the report in his hands. Let that pass; but we are bound to tell him that he made statements about Hindu society, which he ought to have known are entirely baseless and untrue. He is spoken of by some European philanthropists as "miles ahead of his countrymen." If to calumniate Hindu society is to earn that distinction, we do not congratulate Dr. Sircar on the distinction he has earned. The speaker gave great offence to the noblemen and gentlemen who were present at the meeting, and it is only a sense of propriety, in the presence of the Viceroy, that prevented them from showing his remarks in their true colours. Mr. Justice Amir Ali, in seconding the adoption of the report, laid special stress on the fact that outside Bengal the support given to the movement had been beyond expectation, and he regretted the general apathy in this Province. Mr. Amir Ali pointed out that the Calcutta Corporation contributed only Rs. 100 per mensem to the Dufferin Zenana Hospital in the metropolis, while it paid a very large sum for the maintenance of an Aslyum for aged and useless animals. This is certainly not creditable to our City Fathers. Mr. Amir Ali observed:—"It had always been an enigma which he had never been able to solve, how it came about that a man would spend thousands of rupees on the marriage of his daughter, and yet would not spend Rs. 5 to supply her with much needed medical advice. Large sums of money were spent on funeral expenses when a few rupees would have saved the life of the person who had died." Mr. Amir Ali spoke of Hindu society in a strain which does him great discredit. In reply to all that he said we could have given him a home-thrust, but we despise this sort of argument, and will merely tell him that he knows absolutely nothing of Hindu social and domestic institutions. Sir Comer Petheram supported the proposal for the adoption of the report. In doing so, he said that when Lady Lansdowne assumed the Presidentship of the Association, he had been assured by Native gentlemen and others that the people did not want medical relief for their women. But, as a matter of fact, women are thronging the hospitals of the Association by the thousand, and it has almost become impossible to meet all the demands made for relief. Well might Sir Comer say that as far as the Fund was concerned, it was now past all criticism; and that it has been clearly proved that it has supplied a real want—a want which had been grievously felt by the women and children of India. Mr. Justice Chunder Madhub Ghose also spoke in support of the resolution and urged the establishment of scholarships to help the students. He was followed by Prince Ferokh Shah, who dwelt on the benefits which Indian women in general, and *parda-nushin* ladies in particular, have derived from the work of the Association.

The report having been adopted, His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor proposed a vote of thanks to His Excellency the Viceroy for presiding at the meeting. After giving a resume of the work done by the Bengal Branch of the Association, Sir Charles Elliott referred to the limited means at its disposal. He pointed out that while in the North-Western Provinces sixteen hospitals had been established, in Bengal only four had been founded, and then remarked:—"It was true that the North-Western Provinces had been his first love, but of late he had been wedded to the Province of Bengal, the richer and elder sister, and he could assure them that he would love, honour and cherish her so long as she acts up to her ideal standard. So wealthy, so well circumstanced by nature, and so highly educated, yet Bengal lagged in the noble cause. There were ten wealthy men in Bengal to every one in the North-West, and yet Bengal had not yet done anything like what the younger Province had done." The Lieutenant-Governor announced that a friend had made an offer of Rs. 15,000 towards the Bengal Branch of the Fund, on condition that, before the Lady President opened the Calcutta Zenana Hospital, the sum of Rs. 20,000 still needed to complete it should be forthcoming. The Maharaja of Bettiah, in seconding the motion for a vote of thanks to the chair, generously offered to add another Rs. 5,000 to his previous contributions to the Fund and to establish a zenana hospital at Bettiah. His Excellency the Viceroy returning thanks remarked that the most encouraging feature in the report is the good progress made by the students and the amount of recognition they have received at the hands of Municipalities and other local bodies. His Lordship said:

> I trust that we are justified in believing that the year which has just come to a close, has brought a material accession of strength to the movement. The increase in the number of patients treated, from 280,000 in 1889 to 411,000 in 1890, is very noticeable. Perhaps the most encouraging feature of all is the good progress of our students, and the amount of recognition which they have received at the hands of Municiplities and other local bodies. It has, I think, now been amply demonstrated that the question is no longer whether India will supply work for female doctors, but whether we can supply the female doctors which India requires to do it.

The Viceroy then gave an interesting account of what he had seen of the work being done under the auspices of the Association during his last autumn tour in Northern India and Rajputana. His Excellency spoke in favourable terms of the liberality of the Maharaja of Darbhanga, of Maharaja Bahadur Sir Jotendro Mohun Tagore and of the Maharaja of Bettiah, and pointed to their example as one which may be worthily imitated by other rich men as well as by the rank and file of the Lower Provinces. His Lordship said:—

> It was very satisfactory to me, during my recent tour, to observe the manner in which, both in the Native Sates and in British India, new hospitals were springing up and receiving endowments from the Chiefs and Rulers. I had occasion to open such hospitals or to lay the foundation-stones of them at Patiala, where the Maharaja has founded a hospital; at Benares, where the Maharaja, whom you will, I am sure, join me in welcoming here this evening, has also founded a hospital; and at Agra. At Udaipore and Ulwar I found hospitals open in connection with the Association, while both at Jeypore and Jodhpore attempts were being made to promote its objects. I am glad to know that in this Province by some a similar liberality has been manifested, and notably the gentlemen whom I see here this afternoon, amongst whom I may be allowed to refer to the Maharaja of Darbhanga, one of the Vic-Presidents of the Association, who has it, I believe, in contemplation to build another hospital in his Raj in connection with the Fund, Sir Jotendro Mohun Tagore, a Member of the Central Committee and the Maharaja of Bettiah, who has been a most liberal subscriber to the Fund, and who has to night announced his intention of making a further contribution to it. While, however, these gentlemen have fully upheld the credit of Bengal, I am afraid that we cannot conceal from ourselves that the amount of general interest evinced, by what may be conveniently described as the rank and file of the Province, in the movement has been most disappointing. I do not mind telling you in confidence that I came here this afternoon intending to make one or two rather severe animadversions upon the comparative illiberality of the support which the Association has received in Bengal. But since I have been in the room, I have heard speech after speech directed to this point, and I have that feeling, which is so prevalent in the mind of every Englishman, that one ought not to hit a man when he is down. I therefore do not like to add any thing to the hard sayings which have already been said about Bengal. I feel, moreover, that, although the Viceroy is a migratory official, he is, during a part of the year, himself a Bengal man, and, as it were, one of the subjects of my freind the Lieutenant-Governor, and that, therefore, any reproach which is cast in the teeth of Bengal is to a certain extent a reproach with regard to which he may be allowed to feel somewhat sensitive.

The Viceroy expressed the hope that before the next annual meeting of the Association is held twelve months hence the reproach which has been cast upon Bengal in connection with the Fund will be entirely removed. It is true that the contributions to the Bengal Branch had not been so large as was expected. But there is a good reason for this. The people of the Lower Provinces are not so much in need of the medical relief given by the Association as those of other Provinces. In almost every part of Bengal good medical aid can be obtained from the graduates of the Calcutta Medical College at a small fee, and the nurses and midwives here are also more intelligent than those of other Provinces. It is, therefore, no wonder that the nobility and gentry of Bengal should feel disinclined to contribute liberally to a Fund the benefits of which cannot be widely utilised. We are, however, glad to learn that Maharaja Bahadur Sir Jotendro Mohun Tagore, K. C. S. I., with his usual liberality has since subscribed 5,000 rupees more, and there is no doubt that the balance will be forthcoming without delay.

POWERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF INDIA.

II.

EXCEPTION has been taken in some quarters to our treating Sec. 18 of 21 George III, chapter 70, as a restriction on the powers of the Governor-General in Council. It has been contended that those restrictions applied to the old Supreme Court and not to the Governor-General in Council. Those who make this contention forget, however, that when 21 George III, chapter 70 was passed the Government of India had no power of making Laws and Regulations, and that that power was vested in the Government several years afterwards. Local legislation was then unknown and the work of judicial administration was done on principles of English law not only by the Judges of the Supreme Court but also by the Governor, or Governor-General, and the members of Council. 13 George III, chapter 63.—"an Act for establishing certain regulations for the better management of the affairs of the E. I. Company"—for the first time gave His Majesty the King the power to establish a Supreme Court at Fort William, and Sec. 38 of that Statute provided that "Governor-General and Council for the time being be declared Justices of the peace of the said settlement" and authorised them "to do and transact all matters and things which to the office of Justice or Justices of the peace do belong and appertain."

Dissension, however, arose "between the judges of the Supreme Court and Gevernor-General and Council of Bengal and the minds of many inhabitants subject to the said Government (were) disquieted with fears and apprehension." 21 George III chapter 70 was passed expressly as an amending enactment because it was thought "expedient that the lawful Government of the provinces of Bengal, Behar and Orissa should be supported, that the revenues thereof should be collected with certainty and that the inhabitants should be maintained and protected in the enjoyment of all their ancient laws, usages, rights and privileges." The subject matter of both 13 George III chapter 63 and 21 George III Chapter 70 was avowedly "the management of the affairs of the E. I. Company". or in modern parlance as Mr. Whitley Stokes has described it, "the Government of India." There can be no question, therefore, that the restriction against interference with the religion of the people is binding on the Governor-General in Council of India. The Bill which ultimately became the Statute entitled 21 George III chapter 70, was the subject of animated discussion in the House of Commons. In order to corroborate the position we have taken above we may remark that the Bill was described by Mr. Dumming as one which "went to establish a despotic power in the Governor-General and Council subversive of all liberty, and totally inconsistent with the constitution, or with human freedom." Mr. Burke said "the idea of establishing civil liberty in India was absurd; the religion, laws and prejudices of the country were against it; if, therefore, it was necessary to establish arbitrary power there, it was better to lodge it in the hands of the Governor and Council, who were responsible for all their actions, than in the hands of the Supreme Court of Judicature." Later on he spoke about the Bill in a way which leaves no doubt on the point that it was intended to regulate the policy of the Government of India as regards the administration of the country and not the mere procedure of the Supreme Court.

We give a rather long extract from the speech of Edmond Burke not merely because it proves our point, but also because it is very *a propos* to the controversy which the Age of Consent Bill has unfortunately raised. Mr. Burke contended "that in necessity, in prudence, and in policy, the Bill before the House was justifiable. It must always be remembered, that the genius of a people is to be consulted in the laws which are imposed upon them. They are to be adapted to the spirit, the temper, the constitution, the habits and the manners of the people. The free system of Great Britain is considered by Britons, and justly, as the best and most beautiful fabric of Government in Europe; but would the Indians think and speak of it in the same terms? No. Their habits were contrary, their dispositions were inimical to equal freedom. They were familiarised to a system of rule more despotic, and familiarity had rendered it congenial. Their situation and their feelings were truly lamentable in the eyes of men enlightened by comparison, and by a knowledge of the true nature of human freedom. It would be a task worthy of benevolence of Britain to relieve those nations from the bonds of mental slavery. But if they should resist the lights of philosophy, if they should reject the proposed good, considering it as the greatest of ills, and declare that they love their old constitution, arbitary and despotic as it is, better than the beautiful and the free system of British legislation, what must be done? Must we abandon the Government of the country rather than agree to rule over them by laws inimical to ourselves? Surely not: men must be governed by those laws which they love. Where thirty millions are to be governed by a few thousand men, the Government must be established by consent and must be congenial to the feelings and to the habits of the peop'e. That which creates tyranny is the imposition of a form of Government contrary to the will of the governed; and even a free and equal plan of Government would be considered despotic by those who desired to have their old laws and their ancient system." An enunciation of policy in matters of legislation coming from so high an authority should always command respect, and it is our grateful office to say that that has always been the policy of the British Government in India. So late as 1886 the Government of Lord Dufferin gave expression to the very same principles in words which are well worth quoting. We give the extract from the proceedings of the Government of India dated the 8th October 1886:—"But legislation, though it may be didactic in its effect should not be undertaken for merely didactic purposes; and in the competition of influence between legislation on the one hand and caste or custom on the other, the condition of success on the part of the former is that the Legislature should keep within its natural boundaries, and should not, by over-stepping those boundaries, place itself in direct antagonism to social opinion." We are at a loss to conceive why after the policy of Government in legislating for the people of India has been so very recently laid down in such clear and unmistakable terms there should be an attempt to act quite at variance with that policy.

THE SITUATION OF AFFAIRS.

IT is hardly possible to exaggerate the excitement which has been caused in our midst by the Age of Consent Bill. Angry feelings have been aroused all round, and one hardly knows how to speak out without hurting somebody's feelings. The situation may be analysed thus:

Some persons consider the proposed measure to be productive of immense good to the country, and all the better for its running free of interference with religion; (2) some consider the measure to be productive of only a partial good and would happily see it developed, regardless of interference with Hindu religion; (3) some consider the measure positively noxious for its interference in social and religious matters; (4) some consider that the only means to mitigate the evil that would result from the proposed law would be to prohibit marriages below the age of twelve so pointedly fixed in the Bill; (5) some condemn the measure for violation of the pledge of non-interference given by Government; (6) some do so for causing hurt to their religion; (7) some do so from fear of oppression from criminal proceedings; (8) some have been alarmed in the interests of the Congress; and (9) some would not be sorry to see the Congress quietly stand out the present trial.

The causes of anxiety have become so numerous that we do not see how we could put them in groups with a view to indicate in what way the community itself is divided, influenced by these several causes. Every body who is drawn into the controversy seems to be affected by one or more of these causes of anxiety. Only two classes of men are observable who are in a state of painful or rather pain-giving silence. The majority of our men, and a still larger majority of our women, are not educated. This very large class of men and women are nowhere in the present discussion. Are they prepared to give up the rite of *Garbhadhan*, or will they stick to it in spite of the threatened law? Do they understand that their true security would lie, and for aught we know, it is intended that it should lie, in prohibiting marriages of girls altogether before the age of twelve? Can they ensure for themselves that smaller modicum of security which is speciously held out as available from the rule that though married the child-wife under twelve should never get into the company of her husband? Those who are discussing the question in the press, on the platform, or in private conversation may, as they ought to, help themselves by some decisive action to secure themselves from the clutches of the law. But for those who live beyond the pale of this discussion, where are they to get any help that would save them from the terrors of the law?

Among those whose silence has now become perhaps still more painful are the members of the Viceroy's Executive Council. The Legislative Council has ceased to be a happy family in consequence of Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter's outspokenness. But the reticence of the Executive Council is painful, nay ominous.

Opinions, we know, are being collected by Government; but there is such a hurry about this action that calm and dispassionate judgment has become impossible. It is as if a large collection of utter strangers were in the midst of a fire; every one seems concerned most about himself and least about his neighbour. Notwithstanding great divergence of opinion the utmost impatience is visible in hearing and being heard. Whoever does not blindly follow some other person is looked upon by the latter as noxious, or obstructive and dishonest withal. However, this hurry and impatience may all be traced to a single source: the desire of the Legislature to get through the Bill as quickly as possible.

It is utterly impossible to hurry on the Bill. We cannot help asking for time and patience. Be it for good, or be it for evil, there is no denying the fact, that there is stern opposition to the measure. Sound legislation can never ignore the existence of such wide-spread opposition. The opposition on religious grounds, for instance, cannot possibly be shirked. And as the religious question has to be faced it cannot be made short work of. Religion can never be trifled with. To solve the present religious difficulty without *at all* interfering with the Simla season is not possible. If the measure is intended to be soberly dealt with, some sort of assurance ought at once to be given by Government for people to come forward with their suggestions after mature consideration. If you hurry them on you cannot expect them to give a calm and passionate judgment.

We cannot undertake to commit ourselves to some definite line of action on behalf of the Hindu community in the present hurry. Still less are we inclined to admit that the Hindu community is not amenable to reason. But nothing can be done in hot haste in a matter affecting the marriage law of fifty, if not two hundred and fifty, millions. We ask: Is the Government prepared to wait a while? If it is not so prepared, it is simply out of the question to try to devise means by which a conflict of opinion may be avoided. We hope better counsels will yet prevail.

RETURNING GOOD SENSE.

ONE of the most sensible contributions to the Age of Consent literature beyond doubt is an able and well argued note of Mr. M. Ghosh published last week. Mr. Ghosh is one of the most prominent Congress leaders and his unqualified condemnation of the Bill will much strengthen our cause, and go a great way in saving the Congress, which, through the mistaken zeal of some unthinking men, had pretty nigh come to the point of wreck. Mr.

Ghosh boldly tells his would-be critics that he for one does not apprehend of being misunderstood as a defender of "barbarous customs" by opposition to the bill, a silly feeling that has actuated many supporters of the Bill who would otherwise be glad to be ranged on the side of their countrymen. Eye-shame and fear of offending the British constituencies account for the action of many who have shamefully prostituted their beliefs and convictions in this concern and to these weak-kneed patriots Mr. Ghosh's manly attitude ought to be a lesson. Mr. Ghosh thinks that if Government feels itself strong enough to drive a coach and four through our religion, customs and beliefs let it do so to some purpose. Let it stop early marriage, if it can, which in the light of some may be a measure of real reform, if practicable. But as for the Bill now before Council, Mr. Ghosh examines the legal aspects of it in the light of the English law which we have no desire to trouble our readers with, nor have the space to do so. We can only note what will give some idea of its tendency. Mr. Ghosh begins by saying:

Many have supported the Bill irrespective of its intrinsic merits, merely because it aims at introducing what they regard as a much needed reform, while others have violently opposed the measure, not because they are opposed to any real reform, but because they resent any legislative action in such matters. The controversy has unfortunately assumed such an aspect that all who support the Bill are supposed to be on the side of reform, while all those who oppose it, are denounced as defenders of the revolting practices which are sought to be put down. Among those who are in favour of the Bill, many have been so far carried away by their indignation and disgust, that they absolutely refuse to examine closely a measure which profess to put down such shocking practices; while there are some who, I regret to say, have given their unqualified support to it, chiefly through fear of being mistaken as defenders of the customs which lead to those practices.

Mr. Ghosh goes on to say:

It is urged, and I think with considerable force that before proceeding to deal with social questions, and before deciding what customs ought or ought not to be put down in the interests of the people, the Government should so construct the legislature of the country that all important sections of the people may be adequately represented therein. I believe a large number of those who are strenuously opposing the present measure are chiefly influenced by this last consideration, but have unfortunately based their objection upon wholly different grounds, It is always a difficult matter to ascertain, on any important question, what the Hindu religion(as expounded by the different ancient sages and law-givers) enjoins. Very few persons in the country would care to be influenced by the results of such an enquiry, if one were to be undertaken by the Government. The bulk of the people in all parts of India, would adhere to a prevailing belief, or a prevailing custom, even if they were told that such belief or custom had not the sanction of their ancient books. The practical question, therefore, to my mind, is not whether the proposed measure in any way militates against any direction to be found in any of the ancient *Sastras*, as they may now be expounded by one or two learned men, but whether it any way tends to interfere with the prevailing religious belief or prevailing social custom supposed, erroneously though it be, to have the sanction of religion. People all over India are more swayed by prevailing custom than by any learned exposition of the *Sastras*, and I regret to have to say that having regard to prevailing customs and ideas on the subject in Bengal, the extension of the limit of age which has been proposed would be regarded by a very considerable section of orthodox Hindus in Bengal, as an interference whih their religious ideas on the subject of marriage, as regards that class of cases to which reference has been made by Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter. I doubt whether any amount of learned argument, based upon the meaning of old texts, will convince them that they are wrong. I may add that on the third night of the marriage, according to a custom prevailing all over Bengal among Hindus, the bride and bridegroom must be in bed together, and I am not at all sure that persons who, after the passing of this measure, continue to put a tender girl of 11 in the same bed with a young man of 20 or 25 will not run the risk of being prosecuted on a charge of abetment of the actual offence, even though that offence be not committed. Whether a good defence may not be set up in such a case is a question which it is now unnecessary to discuss. My own opinion on this point is that the Bill does indirectly interfere, as regards a limited class of cases, with the *prevailing* religous ideas and customs of the people in Bengal.

Mr. Ghosh then sums up the legal aspect of the question:—

No case has ever come into court except when fatal results have taken place. It may be said that scarcely any one in the country, except legal practitioners, knew that the Penal Code applied to the case of husbands, but I think the true reason, for there having been no cases, to the disinclination of the people to expose their domestic life, and the natural reluctance of a wife to complain against her husband in such a matter. It seems to me perfectly certain that no cases will ever be made public unless fatal injuries result, or unless medical aid becomes absolutely necessary to save life. As regards that limited class of cases, *whatever may be the age of the wife*, it seems that the existing law does contain ample provision for the punishment of the offending husband. If then the proposed enactment is to continue to be practically a dead letter I must respectfully venture to express my disapproval of it on the ground that it will entirely defeat its own object and fail to give adequate protection to child-wives in India.

Mr. Ghosh goes on:—

I do not believe that the proposed measure will have that effect. It does not admittedly give any protection to immature wives above the age of 12, and therefore seems by implication to sanction intercourse in cases where, by the clear texts of even the Hindu religion, it would be sinful for a husband to have carnal knowledge of his wife. The evils resulting from the prevailing practice may be classed under two heads.—(1) The direct and immediate results, which relate to physical injuries culminating sometimes in death. (2) The indirect and remote results which include premature maternity and physical degeneracy as well as the demoralisation of both husband and wife. As regards the first class of evils, the ordinary provisions of the Penal Code relating to hurt, grievous hurt and other offences for which a man is liable to 7 years' imprisonment, if not more, seem to be sufficient if only the charges can be proved by satisfactory evidence. As regards the second class of evils, it seems to me that the only practical remedy is to strike at the very root of the custom which allows little girls of tender years to become wives, and not an amendment of section 375 of the Penal Code. Cases falling under this latter class will never come into court, and the Penal Code cannot reach them.

We apprehend a re-action following the enactment of the Bill that will really retard reform and our would-be reformers should take the following warning of Mr. Ghosh:—

The great difficulty of ascertaining the exact age of girls in this country, especially among the poorer classes, must not be overlooked; and in this connection it may be as well to draw attention to a class of cases likely to be of frequent occurence where men may marry girls under the belief that they are 12, while as a matter of fact they may not be so. If the offence is rape, a reasonable belief on the accused husband that his wife was above 12 will I apprehend in the present state of the law be no defence. A belief based upon a reasonable cause as to the age of the girl has been made in certain cases a good defence under the Criminal Law Amendment of 1885 in England for any accused person who has intercourse *unlawfully*, while a husband in this country is clearly in a worse position It is notorious that the age of a Hindu bride is often misrepresented by parents and marriage-brokers before marriage. I may also point out that while by the present law of England any man who attempts to have carnal and unlawfnl knowledge of a girl under the specified limit (now 13) is punishable only with 2 years' hard labour, a husband in India if guilty of an attempt at rape on his own wife would be punishable with transporation for 10 years according to the Penal Code (SS. 511 and 57.) This anomaly also arises from making the husband punishable for the offence of rape. * * * His Excellency the Viceroy has observed in the Legislative Council, that "the effect of the law in the country is often valuable for its educative operation," but we have to remember the fact that, during a period of 30 years, the provision introduced by the Law Commissioners in 1846 and passed into law in 1860, has failed to produce, in the slightest degree, any educative effect on the people, as the prevalence of child-marriages and the existence of the practices show, and it seems to me extremely doubtful whether the present measure will have any better effect. It is just possible that, having regard to the present agitation, parents among the higher classes may in future be deterred from marrying their daughters before the age of 12, but, on the other hand, we cannot forget the possibility of parents of Bengal being induced to marry their sons earlier than they have been hitherto doing, that is to say marrying them at the age of 7 or 8 to girls of 5 or 6, so that their sons may not be capable of transgressing the law before their wives attain the age of 12. For my part I should, in common with others interested in the question of social reform, deeply deplore such a result. It is worthy of note that in certain parts of the country, and among certain classes, where Hindu boys of 6 or 7, or 8 are married to girls below that age, the Bill has evoked no opposition whatever. The reason is obvious. As against the possible indirect educative effect which the Bill, if passed, is likely to have on the people, I cannot help placing the great probability (I was almost going to say, certainty,) of the people resorting to perjury, and even forgery, on the question of age, for the purpose of meeting prosecutions which may be instituted.

There is a practical question that would arise in this connection to which we may here draw attention. In those cases in which the reaction does not set in, parents will be anxious to secure for their sons brides unquestionably above twelve, and if they are strict Hindus as many of them will continue to be in spite of law and legislation, they will also take care that these brides do not belong to a class that may have passed a certain condition in life. The result will be that these unfortunate girls will never be married into Hindu families and will be so to speak so many out-castes. Mr. Ghosh is himself a reformer and he makes some mistakes natural to his class which we will not notice here, particularly as they do not in any way tend to weaken the force of his dissent. He advocates civil legislation prohibiting early marriage, which proposal may be considered in its proper place. In this connection Mr. Ghosh makes an observation over which our reformers who are responsible for the initiation of the present Bill, might well pause and ponder:—

If the Government thinks that the country is not yet prepared for such legislation as I suggest, I can only express my regret that, by introducing the present Bill, it has indefinitely postponed the introduction of a substantial measure of reform which is urgently called for in the interests of the women as well as of the men of India. Hindu orthodoxy has been already roused, and it would be disastrous to the cause of reform, if the result of all this agitation is to be futile penal law, and the indefinite postponement of any interference with a custom which strikes at the very root of the well-being of the people

Mr. Ghosh has recently consented to his being placed on the London Committee which is said to be responsible for having suggested the present measure. But he distinctly says in his note that he is not prepared to approve of all the suggestions which have emanated from that body. He thinks the true question, which ought to be calmly and dispassionately considered, is *not* wheher the practices complained of ought or ought not to be repressed, but *whether the present measure is the best, the most appropriate, and the most effectual remedy for the evils which are said to exist*—and which, as a matter of fact, exist only in the imaginations of the advocates of 'reform.'

Latest News and Notes.

THE Viceroy and Lady Lansdowne have been observing *Sarasvati Puja* with some *eclat*. Their Excellencies gave a large luncheon party at Barrackpur on Saturday. The Government House party went out on Friday evening, the guests followed by river at midday on Saturday.

SIR CHARLES ELLIOTT returned from his unostentatious Midnapur tour expressly to be present at the Dufferin Fund Meeting on Monday last. His Honor left for Chittagong on Friday last, where he is due on the 15th instant. Rangamati and Dacca will be taken in the way, and His Honor will be back to town on the 26th instant. On his return, and about the 28th instant, the first meeting of the Bengal Council will be held, when a Bill to amend and consolidate the law relating to the sale of land tenures in Bengal, will be introduced.

SIR Charles Crosthwaite left Calcutta for England on Tuesday last.

JUSTICE O'KENEALY, and not Justice Tottenham as announced before, will preside at the first Criminal Session, of the High Court, which meets on the 18th instant.

THE following notification has been issued to all mafussil courts:—"The 26th instant having been fixed by the Government of India as the date on which the final census will be taken throughout India, I am directed, at the instance of his Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, to request that you will be so good as to suspend, as far as possible, the business of your court between the 25th and 27th idem." This is very vague and unsatisfactory. The better course perhaps would have been to close the courts altogether. The object of the notification evidently is to keep litigants at home, which may not, however, be gained by this uncertain middle course. For proper enumeration it would be perhaps more desirable to give a general holiday.

ON the invitation of the Calcutta Corporation Mr. Baldwin Latham will inspect and report upon our drainage system, and advise the Municipality "on the outfall and flushing arrangements of the town drainage, and as to the best method of expending the available funds on the drainage of the added area." The fee charged is Rs. 5,000 and all expenses will have to be paid, meaning that we are going to spend Rs. 6,000 in all. Mr. Latham has been paid half the fee and a proportion of the expenses in advance, and he has arrived in Calcutta.

REUTER telegraphs that all attempts to bring about a settlement between the two sections of the Parnellites have collapsed. Woe indeed to Home rule in Ireland unless the Parnellites yet come to their senses.

ACCORDING to another telegram a Bill introduced by Lord Cross, to enable certain high officers in India to go home on certain occasions without vacating their appoinments, has been read the first time in the House of Lords. What may it mean, what are the objects and reasons, and who are the favoured officers? The pay-question will not be affected, we suppose.

MR. LEE was good enough to take down by special train on Friday last a number of Members of the India Club, the Town Club and the Sobhabazar Sporting Club to witness the Athletic Sports at Barasat. There was some good sports, and Mr. Abinash Chunder Mullick, the Sub-Divisional Officer, did his best to make the day's outing enjoyable to his guests. Mr. Lee who was himself the Sub-Divisional Offieer there fifteen years ago, was the founder of these annuals sports which have since been kept up.

A SPECIAL general meeting of the British Indian Association was held on Wednesday afternoon at the Association Rooms to consider the Age of Consent Bill. Maharaja Bahadur Sir Narendro Krishna was in the chair; several speakers, including Raja Peary Mohun Mookerji, Raja Sasishekhareswar Roy, Babu Kunjo Lal Banerjee, and Babu Jodulal Mullick, spoke pointing out the interference that would be caused to Hindu religious rites and social usages. The following Resolution was unanimously passed:—

That this meeting cordially approves of the action taken by the Managing Committee of the Association in the matter of the Age of Consent Bill, and fully endorses the views and opinions embodied in the letter on the subject which they have submitted to the Government of Bengal.

It was also resolved to despatch a telegram to the Secretary of State craving his Lordship to direct the withdrawal of the Bill, on the ground that it would seriously affect Hindu religious law relating to the age of marriage.

IT is stated that Mr. C. E. Buckland will act for Mr. Nolan, as Secretary to the Bengal Government in the General and Revenue Dedartments, when he proceeds on leave. Mr. Buckland is a highly able, energetic and popular officer and withal strong. His elevation, though it will be a loss to the Board of Revenue of which he has held the post of Secretary for some time, with great credit, will be a real acquisition to the Bengal Secretariat, where men of his calibre and ability are very much wanted.

MR WOODROFFE finished his address to the jury in the Jain defamation case on Thursday. The Saraswati puja holidays intervening, the case will be resumed this morning, when the learned judge will charge the jury. They must have had a tedious time of it throughout the trial but have listened to the proceedings with remarkable patience, having regard to the very important issues at stake.

THE Corporation at their meeting of Thursday last raised the salary of their Chairman to 3000 rupees, the maximum allowed by the law. There was some slight opposition to the increase, as it was felt by Babu Narendranath Sen and Babu Surendranath Banerjee that it was too early yet to think of it. The Chairman very properly left the meeting while the discussion was in progress and the opposition quietly gave way. The resolution was carried by a large majority, only three voting against it. Maharaja Sir Narendra Krishna Bahadur K. C. I. E., moved it in absence of Babu Kalinath Mitter and Babu Amarendra Nath Chatterjee seconded it. In doing so Babu Amarendra Nath observed that it was an anomaly upon the occasion of the appointment of a new Chairman that he was kept out of his full pay for a few months. No great saving of Municipal expense was effected by this arrangement, and it was difficult to see the reasons and considerations which had brought about this procedure. We regret that we cannot share in these views for there are very good reasons why the Chairman should be kept out of his full pay till he has fairly earned it. We are however perfectly at one with him in thinking that in the present instance at any rate the Chairman, in getting an increase, had the satisfaction of knowing and feeling that the increase allowed to him was earned by him, and was the result of satisfactory relations between him and the Commissioners. He desired, from his place as a Commissioner, to be permitted to give expression to his conviction, and he felt sure it was shared in by his colleagues, that during the short experience they had gained of Mr. Lee's qualifications for the office which he filled, he had given the most unmistakeable indications of intelligence, energy and courtesy." We quite agree with Babu Amarendranath and think that Mr. Lee during the short time he has been in office has entirely fulfilled public expectations. If he will only keep touch with the Commissioners unimpaired and keep the Executive well in hand there are good indications of his administration being entirely successful.

LADY LANSDOWNE distributed prizes to the Bethune School girls on Thursday, which was the occasion of some *eclat*. The report from which we make the following extract showed a good year's work upon which the management may well be congratulated:—

The School is in a flourishing condition, and the new building which has been in course of construction is completed. When the Boarding School was first opened in 1878 there were only 10 pupils, and the general opinion was that the experiment would turn out a failure: but it has happily proved a great success; so much so, that the Committee have been obliged to refuse applicants for admission, owing to want of room. Sir Steuart Bayley, on behalf of the Bengal Government, had given a grant of Rs. 38,000 for the erection of the new building. This had cost Rs. 40,000, but it would remove a want long-felt. There were at present 119 pupils on the rolls of the School, out of which 27 were boarders and the rest day scholars. There are 16 students in the College class. The result of last year's work was highly satisfactory: three pupils had presented themselves for the B. A. examination, and all three had passed in English, while three students had gone up for the Entrance examination, and all three had been successful. Four candidates are going up for the F. A., and five pupils presented themselves for the last Entrance examination held the other day, the results of which are not yet known.

HIS EXCELLENCY the Viceroy in addressing the assembly said:—

The difficulties which stand in the way of female education in India are obvious to everyone. They are most of them inherent in the social system of the country. It is useless to ignore them or to hope that they will be surmounted rapidly and without trouble. We may perhaps find some consolation in the thought that, if the women who have received anything approaching a proper education in India form a small minority of the whole female population, India is certainly not the only country in which, whether by accident or design, women have been deprived of their share of intellectual cultivation and mental discipline. We have only to go back a few years in order to find ourselves at a time when but a very small minority of the women of Great Britain received an education worthy of the name. You all know how rapidly this state of things has been changed 'at home.' We have now what is virtually compulsory education for girl, as well as for boys, in every village of the United Kingdom. In nearly every city of importance excellent high schools are growing up, while at the great Universities, Colleges have been founded for the exclusive use of the female students, who are not only admitted to the same degrees as their male competitors, but who lately, in several conspicuous cases, utterly distanced them and achieved the highest honours which the University is able to award. Here in India we are only at the beginning of this much-needed reform. It is one which it is not for the Government of India to impose upon the people of the country, although it can do a great deal, and does do a great deal in the way of granting facilities; it is one which we may safely predict that in good time the people of the country themselves will insist upon effecting.

THESE are truly sound and statesman-like views and the pity is that in regard to certain other but cognate matters effect should not have been given to them with consistency. It is a libel on the nation to suppose that our women are cruelly treated or not well taken care of; a libel that Lord Lansdowne would not have allowed his Government to be guilty of if facts were honestly laid before him. Since the introduction of the Age of Consent Bill His Excellency may have had occasion to change his opinion, which probably accounts for the views enunciated in this speech. The Hon'ble Justice Guru Das Bannerjee in proposing a vote of thanks to His Excellency took the opportunity of putting in a good word on behalf of our ill-understood and much abused society. He said that in the protection and education of subjects the good ruler was more than a father, as he gave life to life, whereas a father only gave life. It was needless at that time of day to expatiate on the importance of education. He did not share the opinion of the well wishers of the country that the condition of females in India was as bad as it could be, but he could not say it was as good as it could be, or as good as it would be in India's future; but he had no hesitation in saying that female education could and would make every progress in this land.

WE are sincerely glad to be able to announce that all our three distinguished fellow-citizens, whose recent illness had caused public serious anxiety are now well. Nawab Abdul Latif Bahadur, Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee and Babu Surendranath Banerjee have completely recovered and resumed their respective careers of usefulness.

THE Mahomedan Literary Society presented their address of welcome to Sir Charles Elliott on Thursday last. The function has had to be deferred owing to illness of Nawab Abdul Latif Bahadur, whom His Honor heartily congratulated on his recovery. In his reply to the address His Honor pertinently observed:

I have already had an opportunity, on another occasion, in addressing another representative body of your community, of saying how much I desire that a larger measure of political influence and Government appointments may fall to the Mahomedans of Bengal. And I have professed my intention of doing all that I can to ensure that appointments shall be given with due respect to the importance of the Mahomedan community, so far as it is possible for me to find Mahomedan gentlemen thoroughly fit and educated, and who will not discredit, but add credit to, the service to which they may be appointed.

THE Bengal Chamber of Commerce had its annual meeting on Monday last, when another good year's work was reported. The Hon'ble Mr. Mackay, who has been re-elected President of the Chamber, in a long speech took a comprehensive survey of the year's work and touched upon the

new railway projects, the Kidderpur Docks, the navigation of the Hooghly, the Port charges and railway freights. The important question of Exchange was dwelt upon at some length and due animadversions were made on the proposed Factory legislation and the unsatisfactory working of the Merchandise Marks Act and the Income-tax Act. There was natural exultation at the curtailment of the Durgapuja holidays and gratification that European Bankers at any rate under the proposed amendment in the Evidence Act would not be required to have their books detained in Criminal Courts. Regarding the holiday question Mr. Mackay was, however, good enough to reassure mercantile clerks that the holidays in all Government Offices, except the few which do business with the mercantile public, remain exactly as they were before, and holidays in private offices are, as formerly, in the gift of the employers. The Chamber desired to have the bank holidays reduced, not because they wished to see clerks deprived of well-earned rest and opportunity for recreation, but because of the insufferable inconvenience which the compulsory closing of the banks, for long stretches at a time, entailed upon the trade of the country, and he felt himself certain that, so far as the members of the Chamber were concerned, they would see that their clerks still get a fair amount of annual holidays altogether irrespective of the Negotiable Instruments Act or any executive notification of the Government of Bengal; and doubtless the same arrangement could be made in those one or two Government Offices which were now properly kept open for the public convenience." Small Cause Court was unfavourably commented upon and in conclusion grief was expressed at the untimely death of Mr. Colman Macaulay. After some discussion the formal business of the meeting was gone through and Sir John Edgar and Colonel Ardagh were elected Honorary Members of the Chamber.

THE *Indian Daily News* says:

An impression seems to be abroad that the subject of Hackney carriage improvement after creating a mild excitement, has been suffered to drop. This is the reverse of the fact, for the matter is still receiving the careful attention of the Committee, which has been augmented by the appointment of additional members; while the Chairman of the Municipality has also taken up the question personally. The Committee has approved of Messrs. Phelps and Remfrys' suggestions, and have made others which, if adopted, should go far towards improving the present wretched condition of our hackney conveyances. The Government of Bengal is to be shortly approached on the subject of an amendment to the existing Act, and it is hoped that the new regulations will be in force before the next licensing day, which will be in April next.

The public has no knowledge as to what these improvements and regulations may be. There is an impression, however, that the improvements will consist of raising the hire and introducing a better and costlier class of conveyances with proper liveries and so on for the European quarters of the town. The third class hackeries will be left unmolested and so far as the general public is concerned no real improvement will be made. The better and more rational plan would be to take in a certain number of carriages every year and insist upon their bettering so that in end we may have cheap and respectable conveyances for general use without fuss and excessive outlay.

REUTER telegraphs that Government will in no way take part in the conference of the Indian Congress delegates to be held in London. The *Englishman* comments upon this as superfluous assurance. If so, nothing would have been lost by not giving it at all. The *Englishman* in its impotent rage misses the point of the assurance, for we take it to mean an endorsement of the views of the Government of India that the Congress is in no way to be interfered with. Nobody ever expected, nobody ever wanted that the Government, either here or in England, would *take part* in the conference. But that is no reason why a bellicose attitude should be taken.

MADRAS has already had a large public meeting to express its regret at Mr. Bradlaugh's death, and express sympathy with his daughters. It was decided to open a subscription list with the view of perpetuating in some public and permanent form the memory of Mr. Bradlaugh's connection with India. Nearly Rs. 1,000 was subscribed on the spot. Similarly public meetings have been held at Bombay, Cawnpur and other important cities. A largely and influentially signed requisition has been sent, we understands, to the Sheriff for calling a public meeting at Calcutta on an early date.

THE Budget Statement for the year will be published on Friday, the 20th of March, and there is said to be reason to hope that the results will be more satisfactory than was expected. The *Englishman*, however, predicts that although the Budget will doubtless show a position of equilibrium, it is to be feared that there can be no remission of taxes. The year has witnessed, we are told, a heavy loss in opium.

IT is announced that Mr. Henry is to be appointed Inspector General of Police in Bengal. Mr. Henry is an officer of long standing and experience and has touch of the people. His selection, we are sure, is perfectly well deserved, and the Police may be expected to improve under his discipline considerably, though the Commission is not likely to effect much good.

THE sense of balance sometimes has a strange hold upon the British Government that might be really useful on other occasions. In the House of Commons, the Baron de Worms, replying to a question, said that Government saw no reason why Ceylon should be exempted from its fair share of the expenses attending both imperial and local defence. The decision of Government in the matter would, he said, be shortly communicated to that colony. There was a suggestion in England latterly that England and India should jointly bear the costs of the Cesarewitch's Indian tour. What came of that? Maritime security of the British Empire is not the concern of Ceylon so much though as that of Great Britain, the accident of insularity is predicable of both.

INDIAN subjects are drawing some attention yet in Parliament, though Mr. Bradlaugh is gone. Sir W. C. Plowden has secured the first place on the 17th instant for a motion similar to the one of which Sir Roper Lethbridge has given notice, in reference to the discussion of Indian affairs in the House of Commons. Sir Roper Lethbridge's motion, is, therefore, superseded by Mr. Plowden's. In the meantime Mr. McLaren has given notice that he will move an amendment to the second reading of the India Councils Bill, regretting the absence of the elective principle. Mr. Maclean on the other hand will move an amendment to Mr. McLaren's, expressing his satisfaction thereat. Mr. Maclean, as our readers well know, is the wilholm Editor of the *Bombay Gazette*, who takes all possible opportunities of running down Indian interest.

A SHOCKING accident is reported from Barasat. Two soldiers of the Dum Dum cantonments appear to have gone out shooting and some how or other one came to be shot by his comrade. Whether the catastrophe was the result of a drunken brawl or a pure accident there is nothing to show, and the mystery will never be cleared up. The survivor came back to the cantonment and while crossing the barrack yard shot himself. The coat and the gun of the deceased are missing. The survivor, before committing suicide is said to have reported to his officers that he had accidentally killed his comrade. We have repeatedly urged upon the military authorities the imperative necessity of better controlling ball ammunition, but even these numerous accidents will not awaken them somehow to the gravity of the situation. It does not matter whether an O'Hara murders a native or a comrade, or an officer. It is time that some decided action were taken; the neighbourhood of cantonment towns are steadily losing their accustomed sense of quiet and security when life, property, and sometimes female honor, are endangered.

MR. DEAN, long the Superintendent of Printing of the Government of India, is about to retire. His place will be taken by Mr. Ross, Superintendent of Jail Printing.

MR. MANFIELD, a Gladstonian-Liberal, has been elected for Northampton by a majority of 1,715 votes over Mr. Germaine, the Conservative candidate. The Conservatives had no chance with the feeling so high in favour of Liberal principles, in the borough where Mr. Bradlaugh's name and memory are loved, revered and honored. It is to be hoped that the "Junior Member for Northampton" which in Parliament for some years was synonymous with protection of Indian interests will not forget or neglect the implied duties of his office.

EVERYTHING is fair in love and war, they say. But even this peculiar fairness must have a limit. It is hardly fair to get one's reporters to bring out a case of *threatened* brutality to a "child wife" in absence of anything better, or to pronounce "early marriage a failure" because a foolish girl of sixteen commits suicide for reasons that would have exasperated even if she were married at sixty. But let that pass. The following effusion regarding the supposed prejudices of a certain ignorant and foolish boat-man is amusing:—

Surely there is some responsibility attaching somewhere for this lamentable ignorance! What is all the pretence of enlightenment of which we hear so much! What of the civilisation that existed when the English race were barbarians clothed in skins or paint! What of the thousands of graduates who are to be the ellectorate of the future, the guides and philosophic friends of the State! Is the country still to remain under the conviction that it is a religious duty not to succour distress or to save life, if only the spirit of the waters—whatever that may be—is appeased by the work of destruction carried out in her bosom! Surely there is a work here as worthy of Mr. Hume and Mr. Bonnerjee, as trying to obtain votes for men who do not know what to do with them, and which would effect but little of they did. Why the anxiety to increase and multiply the race at the earliest possible date and in the crudest way, and this indifference to it when it does exist! Truly these things are mysteries, and they are called "religion." And there are pandits, teachers, scholars, and alphabetted men scattered throughout the land by thousands, who profess to be guided by these absurd superstitions, and who are not ashamed to subordinate their natural intelligence, and their acquired knowledge to these "old wife's tales." Well may Mr. Caine and others—"Friends of India"—say that it is enough to make one despair when the light of science and philosophy shines so dimly, and burns only to manifest the darkness that surrounds them all.

The occasion of all this fume and fury is a letter in the correspondence column of a contemporary which says:—

The Native boatmen believe that it is sinful to save a person from drowning. They look upon it as a sacrifice to the goddess *Gunga* (river), and if they tried to prevent it, the wrath of the goddess would fall upon their own heads.

STRANGE, however, that "Editorial reality" should have been oblivious of a second letter following the first in which Mr. Cunningham, an Assistant Harbour Master, writes:—

With reference to the picking up two men of the ship *Dundee*, I beg to state that all the credit is due to the *manjee* and crew of No. 18 Hawser boat, by their *very prompt* attendance to my orders, by whistle signal, to which I have drilled them, and which they thoroughly understand. At the moment I was not in a position to board the boat without considerable loss of time which might probably have caused loss of life.

Can blind prejudice so far warp peoples' conscience and judgment? Alas, alas for the frailty of humanity.

MR. COTTON has lately been speaking at the Oriental Seminary, and expatiating upon the didactic value of discussions about sexual morality to his youthful audience. He would put down early marriage as "destructive to purity and self control." We are unluckily not yet provided with all the "civilised" requisites to adopt this ideal standard of morality, for the better perfection of which courtship

divorce and other institutions must come in the train of the new order of things. Joint family system also is yet in its vigour, though our laws and law courts are doing their best to undermine it. Express penal legislation forbidding large joint family must precede the thorough purification of our social institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS and conclusions of Commissions appointed by Government are not acceptable, and as a matter of fact are not accepted, unless they agree in the main with the Governmental views on the subject. Rejection is sure to be the fate of the recommendations of the Factories Commission, that has just concluded its labours and sent all its reports, so far as they may go against legislative interference. Philanthropic legislation is the order of the day in all walks of life, of which Lord Cross and Sir John Gorst are the great apostles. Sir John Gorst in a recent speech at Chatham on the labour question said that he generally favoured State intervention for the protection of the work people, and thought that Government might intervene to prevent overwork in the Indian mills. Of course, for without foregone conclusions Commissions would not be worth appointing.

THE *Englishman* has discovered a monster gooseberry—out of season. Twenty thousand Hindu ladies of Bombay have memorialized the Queen Empress, we are seriously told, pressing for the enactment of the Scoble Bill. We did not know that the Western Presidency had made such a rapid progress in Hindu female education. One of three things must be true : either 20,000 ladies have *not* signed the memorial, or they are *not* Hindus, or they are *not* ladies. In Dacca, we are told, questionable steps are being taken for a questionable purpose.

SOME 'reform' advocates in the Congress would not at all mind orthodox cessation, we are told, because it is bound to come on sooner or later, whenever any advanced proposal for social progress is put forth. They would have us "weeded out," they say, and the sooner the better, somewhat on the lines of the angry *Dalapati*, who would outcaste the whole village, and have a *dal* by himself. For the sake of the Congress and the country and our common cause, we cannot afford to do anything more than exclaim, "Just like their impudence." The millions are to subbordinate their convictions to their airy wishes, and autocracy of one class is to give way to oligarchy that is hateful and unbearable. We would have no patience with such crass nonsense, if we had not the very best of reasons to believe that this froth is entirely on the surface, and that the better classes of them, namely, the true reformers, are alarmed at the situation developed by their wayward stupidity. Intolerable oligarchy that will for the sake of furthering experimental ideas sacrifice the convictions and interests of the nation cannot be the object and scope of the Congress, for it knows that the fist principle and element of real social reform is the educating of the masses and the spread of that educative influence that is baselessly predicated of the Consent Bill. The Congress perceives that advance is steadily being made in the path of reform and it judiciously keeps its hand back for a while lest progress be retarded by some unwise and inopportune move. If any class has to be "weeded out," it is those who by their rash and negligent conduct are endangering the safety of the Congress. More than ever, we repeat, it is the duty of all patriotic men to rally round the banner of this noble movement and to see that it is not prostituted to any base and selfish object.

OUR detractors have the effrontery to tell us that we should have allowed the Bill to pass quietly and not raise this artificial opposition. Just like their impudence again. They take upon themselves to represent the nation and the millions in social questions of vital importance, and consider that *meum* and *tuum* will decide the issue. What do *you* do, what do *I* do, those are the only questions that they are able to put to themselves and their neighbours, and upon the answers received or presumed are we to form our conclusions. Nettled at official contumely they pose as advocates of reform, as if that is the shortest cut to political liberty. They forget that those who have not learnt to adhere to their people through good and evil, are unworthy of any privileges, or they will learn this important principle, some fine day when the present agitation cools down. Our reformers will then be told point-blank that orthodoxy is an element of stability in a society like ours, for though like the ivy it may hoplessly involve the structure, it yet continues to be its mainstay and support. To be thin-skinned enough to be irritated, if foreigners who know nothing about us and do not understand us, will only laugh at us as defenders of barbarous customs, is no more a qualification for disenthralment, than the so-called moral courage of the purist that would hasten to drain off his glass lest in company of drunkards he should be laughed at as a person with prejudices. Where is the barbarous custom except in the jaundiced eye of the reformer, or of the politician, who is only on the look out for a convenient means of giving the dog a bad name for the sole and single purpose of hanging it. To those whose equanimity has been disturbed by physiological and biological mares' nest would we commend a careful persual of Raja Rajendralala Mitra's able and well-reasoned letter to the Government of Bengal which we published *in extenso* in our last issue. Assumption and assertion are no proof, and we have yet to learn and be convinced that ours is a barbarous custom, and that it is not one that is perfectly well suited to our constitution, country and climate. It has answered our purpose well enough so long. Why should it be suddenly changed? Or why should it be considered or described as barbarous suddenly, unless it be for the convenience of stopping the black man's wagging tongue. If it had been our lot to be in power, in our own light would we have detected barbarities even in the perfect "Western" civilization and there would not be wanting western sycophants in scores and hundreds to re-echo our assumed sentiments. Prove the barbarity for once, and it will be effaced. *That* we call the real educative influence and not starting a controversy that effectively and for all time taints and corrupts the morality of our youths, as the present discussion gathered round the Bill is unquestionably doing.

THE *Indian Mirror* which has been the most loud-tongued in favour of the Bill can at times afford to be sensible, even at the risk of being inconsistent. On Saturday our contemporary wrote :—

"We perfectly understand that the selfish interests of those men require that the spilt between the supporters and opponents of the Age of Consent Bill should grow wider yet. Speaking generally of the opposition, we sincerely believe it to be honest, and inspired by real fears as to the real motives of the Government in having suddenly, and without notice, sprung the Age of Consent Bill upon the country. Though the Viceroy took particular care to give a specific assurance, on the day the Bill was introduced in Council, that Government would on no account, interfere in the sociology and the religion of the people, still that assurance has seemingly not sufficed, and it is very generally believed that the Age of Consent Bill is but an instalment of evils to come. If such a belief had a foundation in fact, we could not foresee anything more disastrous to the British Government than a direct interference in the religious practices of the people of India. England's hold on India depends solely on her toleration of the religious observances of the subject-people. The greased cartridge led to the Sepoy Mutiny. And the present agitation shows that if the people were fully convinced that the Government was trying to dictate to them in matters regarding which they have hitherto depended upon their own religious authorities only, a great convulsion would break throughout the country. Happily the fears of the people have not taken an extreme direction as yet. But a wise Government ought to be watchful of all signs, great and small, and to see that it makes light of nothing, however small in itself. England's position in India is peculiar. The Queen in England is both a temporal and spiritual Sovereign. In India, the Empress can only wield temporal authority. The moment that England stepped beyond the boundary, attempted spiritual sovereignty, her Empire in the East would be in danger. But while we make every allowance for the reasonable fears of the people, we are bound loyally to accept the assurance of the Viceroy that the Government will not interfere in their social and religious affairs.

THEN our contemporory flies at a tangent from the real issue in which we need not follow him. In another column with proper notes of exclamation and interjection our contemporary announces :—

"At Kidderpur, a few days ago, the child-wife of a gowalah, aged only ten years, gave birth to a male child !"

Does he, we wonder, take this to be a fact in favour of, or against, the Bill?

BABU PULIN BEHARI SANYAL, L. M. S., Editor of the "Chikitsa Sammilani" has written an elaborate note on the Age of Consent from the medical point of view, and his conclusions are the same as those of the sixty other medical gentlemen whose opinions the Sobhabazar Committee has collected

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DR. de JONGH'S LIGHT-BROWN COD LIVER OIL.—ITS UNEQUALLED EFFICACY IN CONSUMPTION AND WASTING DISEASES.—Dr. Henry Hanks, author of "Consumption its Treatment and Curability," writes —"The superior efficacy of Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil over the Pale Cod Liver Oil has proved, in my experience, unequivocal. Patients who have persisted for several months in the use of the latter, with scarcely any perceptible improvement, have, after a brief trial of Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil, acquired such fatness, and those distressing symptoms accompanying emaciation have so rapidly subsided, that I have been induced to confide in its reputed remedial powers, and consequently to advise its substitution for the Pale Cod Liver Oil." Benjamin Clarke, Esq., M. R. C. S. F. L. S., author of "Notes and Suggestions on Cod Liver Oil and its Uses," writes—"The effect of the Pale Oil on the circulation is so feebly marked as not to be perceptible; so that in some cases of extreme debility, the patient, from the slowness of its action, is in danger of sinking from exhaustion, or the disease, as in consumption, may become incurable from protraction. My inference agrees with the remark that Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Oil effects a cure in half the time that the Pale Oil does." Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil is sold only in capsuled imperial half-pints, pints and quarts, by all chemists, druggists and store-keepers. Sole Consignees, Ansar, Harford Co., 210, High Holborn, London.

MEMORY. LOISETTE'S System. A Cambridge University Lecturer (Dr. R. N. Ingle) was (Jan. 1890). "much impressed with the possibilities of improvement to Memory which the LOISETTE Lessons open up." "I derived great benefit from your lessons, though at first prejudiced against them by the misrepresentations of Mr. Appleby."—Dr. Geo. Herschell, Physician to the West End Hospital for Diseases of the Nervous System, London. "In three weeks I was able to memorise the names, etc., of 400 men."—Major Jamieson, Bengal C. S. "Having seen the base attempt to rob you, I send, unsolicited, the statement that your system is of great advantage to strong memory, incalculable aid to weak one."—Rev. Dr. J. M. Buckly. 'Excellent travelling companion.'—Capt. J. B. Haye R. N. "Wonderful aid to memory."—Mirza Saderud-din Khan. "Invaluable."—J. J. Francis, Q. C. "Does not involve much labour."—*Statesman*, 23rd Oct. 1887. "Tremendously popular in Oxford."—*Pall Mall Gazette*, 4th February. 1890. Prospectus Free. One Pupil. Rs. 76; Ten pupils, Rs. 19 each. Apply to F. Fisk-Williams, 71, Elliot Road, Calcutta or to A. LOISETTE, 37, New Oxford Street, London, England.

THE only Sandal Pearls which are highly approved by the Parsian Academy of Medicine and the most celebrated French Physicians are "Doctor Clertan's" Sandal Pearls, which contain the pure essence of Sandal enclosed in a thin transparent gelatine envelope which is perfectly soluble and digestive. They have no odour, nor do they in any way affect the digestive organs which so frequently occurs with all similar preparations. Dr. Clertan's Sandal Pearls cure all inconveniences such as contagious discharges, &c., in two, or three days.

WORTH KNOWING.—Messrs Clin & Co., Paris Gents —Since using Dr. Rabuteau's Syrup and Dragees of Iron, I no longer suffer with frightful cramp in the stomach as I did before trying this precious medicament. I have already noticed a very sensible amelioration in the general state of my health, my appetite and strength have returned, and I can walk for some hours without fatigue. I may also state that all the ferruginous medicines which I previously took deranged my stomach, whereas with Dr. Rabuteau's Iron Dragees and Syrup I have never experienced any inconvenience.—Vve. Pregin, rue du Chateau 19, Fontainebleau.

Babu Kanie Lal Mukerjee B. L., a well-known Pleader of the Calcutta Presidency Magistrate's Court, has written another excellent note in which the legal aspects of the question are carefully enquired into, and the Sastric aspect also is incidentally touched.

BENGAL has by no means a monopoly of the opposition agitation. The feeling of dismay in Bombay is as keen, strong and wide-spread as any where else. Long as it is we make room for the following Bombay telegram, dated the 8th instant :—

A monster meeting of about ten thousand Hindus o all castes and sects, including leading merchants, bankers, advocates, pleaders, doctors, graduates, Justices of the Peace, and University Fellows, was held in the Madhavbaug to-day, in pursuance of a largely signed requisition, under the presidency of Rao Bahadur Nana Moroji, ex-Presidency Magistrate, Bombay, and some time Minister of Indore. The meeting was convened to protest against the Age of Consent Bill. The large hall and compound were crowded. After the President's address. and an expression of sorrow and regret for Mr. Bradlaugh's death; the memorial against the Bill was unanimously adopted, and is being extensively signed. Five thousand signatures were obtained on the spot. The memorialists take their stand on the Supreme Government Resolution of October, 1886, sent in reply to the first Madhavbaugh meeting, and stating that legislation for merely didactic purposes should not be undertaken, nor unless asked for by a section of the Hindu community important in influence or number.

The memorial points out that these conditions are not fulfilled in the present instance. Consequently the Bill should not be passed, especially as it interferes with religious customs. Mahadev Chimnaji Apte, a High Court pleader, in moving the adoption of the memorial, clearly described how the proposed law would become a new engine of oppression in the hands of the police and the headlong reformers; and how it would ruin and disgrace the ladies of the family. Rao Bahadur Krishnamukhram Mehta, Small Cause Court Judge, Ahmedabad, seconded the motion in an able preech.

Another resolution, condemning Mr. Ashburner for his libellous attack on the character of Hindu widows, was moved and seconded by Mr. Chimanlal Setalwad and Mr. Nagindas, Court pleaders, and passed. Professor Jinsiwala then exposed the errors of Dr. Bhandarkar in interpreting the Shastras and was followed by Mahamahopadhya Bhimacharya.

A letter from Surgeon-Major Kirtikar, fromerly Health Officer of Bombay, sympathising with the objects of the meeting, was then read; also another from the Secretary to the Anjuman Viaz Islam, sympathising with the meeting, and saying that the Mahomedans regard the present Bill as against their religion, and are taking steps to convene public meetings.

Deputations from several outside stations attended. Thanks were then voted to Sir Romesh Chandra Mitter, Varjiwandas Madhoodas, and the Chairman, and the assemblage dispersed after three cheers for the Empress. The dispute is causing great excitement and enthusiasm. The new interpreters of the Shastras were hissed.

The *Englishman's* own correspondent confirms every word of the above report in his own way. The false impression first started as to Bombay being apathetic, or in favour of the Bill, was, as we ventured to point out, entirely due to reform tactics. The same thing may be predicated of all other parts of the country, where the bulk of Hindu public opinion is said to be either indifferent or favourable.

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WE have received the following telegram from Mr. M. B. Namjoshi, of Poona, and we gladly give it insertion here :

Bhandarkar narrowed Sastric controversy, asking for express Smriti texts, and express statements of leading *Nibandhakars*, who may be considered laying down Sastra for all India enjoining *garbhadhana* on first course. Tilak replies by quoting Laghu Ashvalayana, Brihat Ashvalayana and Chaturvinshati Smritis and express statements of Narayanbhatta and Anantadeva. Express statements of several other leading writers are quoted shewing that *garbhadhana* must be performed on the night of the same day on which preliminary *prajapatya homa* is performed. *Prajapatya* is expressly ordained to be performed on first course in Ashvalayana *Grihya parisishta*, and Bhandarkar has admitted it; therefore *prajapatya* and *garbhadhana* must both be performed on first course. Tilak concludes that this is Hindu Sastra and practice from early Sutra period at least 25 centuries back. Bhandarkar alleged Laghu Ashvalayana spurious because quotations from Ashvalayana in Nibandhas are not found therein. Tilak shows Bhandarkar's conclusion erroneous, proceeding from his not knowing the existence of Brihat Ashvalayana whence these quotations are taken and which can never therefore be found in Laghu.

THE following are some of the places in the mafassil where successful public meetings were held last week for protesting against the Bill :

Chinsura; Zigabari, Rungpore; Shalkea, Howrah; Burdwan; Bongong; Alapsing, Mymansing; Chandpur, Tipperah; Nursingpur, Tipperah; Habigunge, Sylhet; Nagarpur, Tangail; Rahamatpur, Barrisal; Julpiguri; Balasore; Morelgunge, Khulna; Kanihara, Mymansing; Joynagur, 24-Pergannahs; Kushtea; Pratapbati, Jessore; Kaliagunge, Sylhet; Metri, Faridpur; Maheshpur, Jessore; Basra, Barisal; Cooch Behar; Sibpur, Howrah; Srikail, Tipperah; Alishkanda, Dacca; Poshpur, Howrah; Naria, Faridpur; Madhukote, Murshedabad; Champai, Maldah; Balagar, Hughli; Kaligunge, Nuddea; Natuda, Nuddea; Dattapara, Noakhali; Tejpur, Assam; Kotalpara, Faridpur; Bhanga, Faridpur; Pakhania, Mymansing; Khari, 24-Pergannahs; Monghyr; Sujati, Mymansing; Fulshaji, Noakhali; Chagulnai, Noakhali; Bhola, Faridpur; Naraingunj, Dacca; Ratanpur, Rungpur; Maharajgung, Rungpur; Navagram, Dacca; Khariap, Howrah; Nibadhai, 24-Pergannahs; Iswargung, Mymensing; Simulia, Nuddea; Sarisa, 24-Pergannahs; Dhubri, Assam; Shanro, Midnapur; Aranghata, Nuddea; Mahigunjbazar, Rungpur; Tappa, Rungpur; Kurigram, Sadoapooshkurni, Pirgung, Chakkarini, Mamudpur, Pashurampur, Keshubpur, Kananchagari, Bishnupur, Mulatole and Nawabgunge, Rungpur; Kotolepur, Bankura; Srikhund, Agradeep, Mowrat, Kalikapur, Chanduli, Singi, Okrasha and Churpuna, Burdwan; Narit, Howrah; Memari, Burdwan; Khasba, Dacca; Beauli, Rajshaye; and Alberia, 24-Pergunnahs.

Government Notification.

Calcutta Gazette.—*February* 12, 1890.

GENERAL.—Mr W B Martin, Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector, Rampore Hat, Birbhum, is transferred to Monghyr, and is appointed to have charge of the Beguserai Sub-Division of that District.

Babu Ketter Mohun Mitter, Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector is appointed to perform the functions of a Collector under Section 4 of the Public Demands Recovery Act VII (B C) of 1880, in the District of Monghyr.

Mr J Beames, C S on special duty, is allowed furlough, for eight months, under Article 340 (b) of the civil Service Regulations, with effect from the 1st March, 1891, or such subsequent date, as he may avail himself of it.

Captain C Deas, Presidency Volunteer Reserve Battalion, is allowed leave of absence for twelve months, with effect from the 21st January, 1891.

Mr. W H H Vincent, Officiating Joint-Magistrate and Deputy Collector, is posted to the District of Birbhum, and is appointed to have charge of the Rampore Hat Sub-Divison of that district.

Sub-Lieutenant A J Millwood of the Calcutta Naval Volunteers is allowed leave of absence for one month, in extension of the leave granted to him under the order of the 15th November last.

Mr. H Beveridge, Additional District and Sessions Judge, 24 Pergunnahs and Highly, is allowed furlough for nine months, under Article 34 (b) of the Civil Service Regulations, with effect from the date on which he may avail himself of it.

Mr. R F Rampini, District and Sessions Judge, Burdwan, is appointed to act as Additional District and Sessional Judge, 24 Pergunnahs and Hughly during the absence, on furlough of Mr. H Beveridge, or until further orders.

Mr. F W Badcock, Officiating District and sessions Judge, Mozufferpore, is appointed to act as District and Sessions Judge of Burdwan during the absence, on deputation, of Mr R F Rampini, or until further orders.

Mr. G J B T Dalton, Magistrate and collector, Murshidabad, is appointed to be Magistrate and collector of Furripore.

Mr. J Pratt, District and Sessions Judge, Midnapore, is allowed furlough for eight months under Article 340 (b) of the Civil Service Regulations with effect from the 13th March, 1891, or such subsequent date as he may avail himself of it,

Mr. G G Dey, District and Sessions Judge, Backergunge, is appointed to act as District and Sessions Judg of Midnapore during the absence, on furlough, of Mr. J Pratt or until further ogders,

Mr. A E Staley, Joint-Magistrate and Deputy collector, Sarun, is appointed to act as District and Sessions Judge of Backergunge during the absence, on deputation, of Mr. G G Dey or until further orders.

Ecclesiastical.—The Reverend Mothur Nath Haldar, Pastor of the church at Lukhikantapore, 24 Pergunnahs, and the Reverend Prosonno Kumar Guian of Canning Town, 24 Pergunnahs, are hereby granted license under Section 9 of Act XV of 1872 authorizing them to solemnize marriages between persons one or both of whom is a christian or are christians.

The Reverend Mothur Nath Haldar and the Reverend Prsonno Kumar Guian are also appointed to be Registrars of Births and Deaths under Act VI of 1886.

JUDICIAL.—Babu Bunwari Lal Bannerji, B L, is appointed to act as a Munsiff in the District of Burdwan, to be ordinarily stationed at Katwa, during the absence, on leave, of Babu Rajnarain Chuckerbutty, or until further orders.

Babu Rajani Kanta Chatterjee, B L, is appointed to act as an Additional Munsif in the District of Dacca, to be ordinarily stationed at Kaligunge for six months, with effect from the date on which he joines his appointment.

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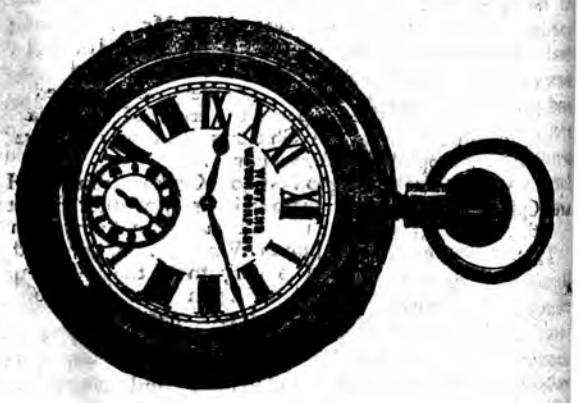

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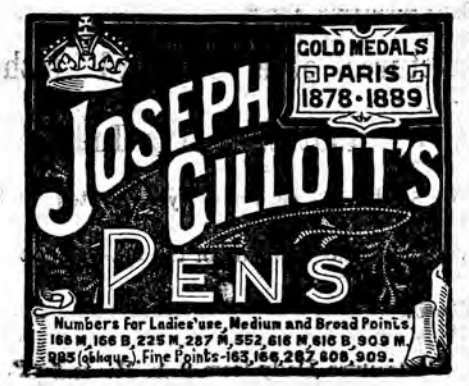
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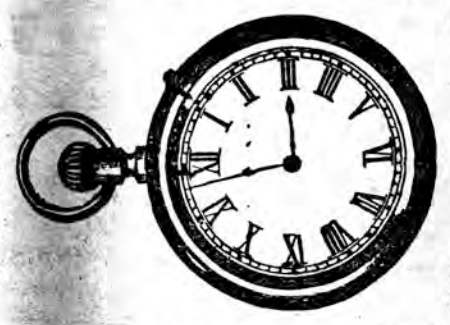

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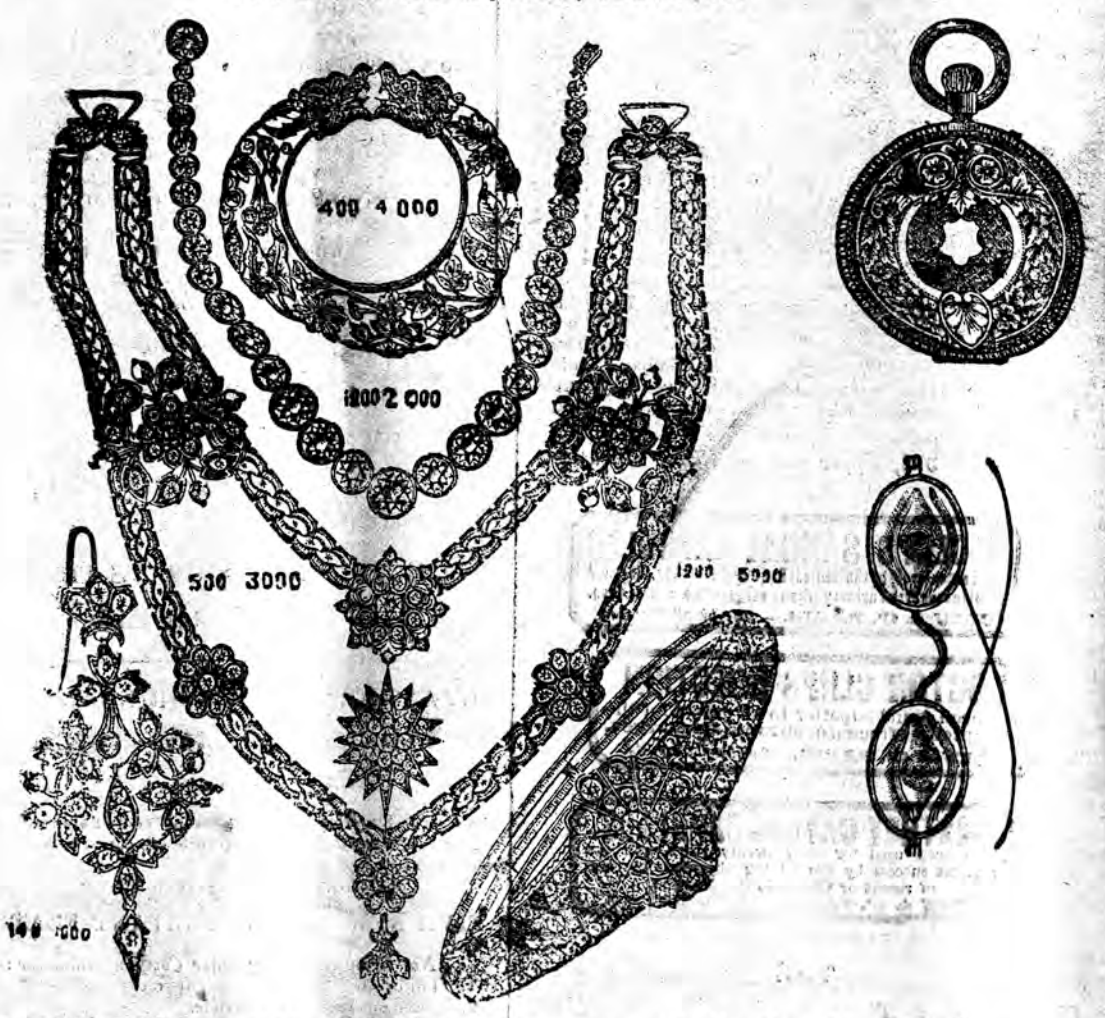

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THE BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION.

AGE OF CONSENT BILL.

To

SIR JOHN EDGAR, K. C. I. E., C. S. I.

Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

SIR,—I nave the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 306J, dated the 22nd January, with enclosures, requesting an expression of opinion of the British Indian Association on the Bill to amend the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1882, and in reply to submit the following observations for the consideration of His Excellency the Viceroy in Council.

1. The Hon'ble Sir Andrew Scoble in moving for leave to introduce the Bill in Council said that the object of the Bill is two-fold. It is intended to protect female children (1) from immature prostitution, and (2) from premature co-habitation. For obvious reasons I pass over the first named aspect of the proposal. With regard to its second aspect my Committee believe, that raising the age of consent from ten to twelve years is an interference with the religious law of the Hindus. They respectfully submit that even as an indirect interference with the Hindu law in regard to marriage of girls this measure is calculated to raise strong opposition and excite very serious discontent among the Hindu community.

2. The *Sastras* enjoin that a certain religious rite, called *garbhadhana*, or conceptual sacrament, must be performed as soon as a girl attains puberty*. This rite, or *sanskara* is one of the essential sacraments of the Hindu religion. It is prescribed in Hindu religious codes of law from the Vedic age down to the present time, and is absolutely necessary for every person professing the Hindu religion to perform it. The scriptural texts on the subject with their respective authorities will be found set out in Appendices. This rite is ordained in the Sutra Codes, and in the Codes of Gautama, Baudhayana, Manu, Yajnavalkya, Vishnu and Parasara, and it is enjoined in all the Ritual Manuals—such as those of Bhavadeva and Raghunandana, Pasupati and Ramadatta, Vasudeva Bhatta and Kalesi,—according to which domestic rites are performed in Hindu families in Bengal. Those who neglect to perform the sacramental rites are not entitled according to Manu, to the sacred ordinances of the Hindu religion contained in the Code of Manu. The real signification of this text is that performance of the conceptual ceremony is obligatory on all Hindus, and those who fail to perform it become outcastes, to whom all religious rites will be denied. This conceptual sacramental rite is to be performed at the attainment of puberty, which occurs, in a large number of cases, in our country, between eleven and twelve. My Committee, therefore, venture to submit that some at least of the injunctions of our sacred books are in direct conflict with the proposals of the Bill, and that modern practice may not with impunity openly violate or disregard them in the observance of the sacraments in strict conformity with the injunctions contained in the *sastras*.

3. The Proclamation which was issued in 1858 by Her Gracious Majesty the Empress of India, to the Princes, Chiefs and people of India, emphatically lays it down . . . . "we disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our Royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise favored, none *molested* or *disquieted*, by reason of their religious faith or observances; but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law: *and we do strictly charge and enjoin on all those who may be in authority under us, that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects, on pain of our highest displeasure.*" The Proclamation invoked divine strength to enable our Sovereign and those in authority under her to carry out her declarations and intents. The spirit of Parliamentary Statute legislation has always been to respect our religion and religious usages. One of the provisions of the India Councils Act lays down that "it shall not be lawful for any member or additional member to introduce, without previous sanction of the Governor General, any measure affecting the religion or religious rights and usages of any class of Her Majesty's subjects in India." The meaning of this provision is that utmost caution should be exercised in legislating, if at all, upon questions affecting the religious usages of the natives of India. So far back as 1780 one of the statutes of George III. directed the Supreme Court of Judicature to pay due regard to the civil and religious usages of the natives of the country and to judge of all acts "done in consequence of the rule and law of caste" according to Hindu and Mahomedan law. Regulation IV. of 1793 also clearly laid down that in suits regarding "marriage, caste, and all religious usages and institutions, the Mahomedan laws with respect to Mahomedans, and the Hindu laws with regard to Hindus, are to be considered as the general rules by which the judges are to form their decisions." My Committee submit those facts to show why the Legislature has hitherto scrupulously avoided any the slighest interference with the religions and religious rights and usages of the natives of India, and they believe that His Excellency the Governor-General would have withheld his sanction to the introduction of the Bill in question, if His Excellency had been duly informed of the exact nature of the Hindu religious law referred to above, before his permission was applied for.

4. The toleration which the British Government has extended to all the religious creeds of India has served to bind the natives of the country, with indissoluble bonds of union, to the British Throne, and has united men of all creeds and color to live in peace and harmony under our benign Government. Furthermore, my Committee venture to think that it would be impracticable for a Christian Government to conscientiously discharge its sovereign functions unless it carefully kept itself aloof from the conflicting demands of the various non-Christian communities who live in India, and whose peace and prosperity have higher claims upon it than the comparatively unimportant moral question which is involved in the Bill under consideration The present measure is intimately connected with our religion, and with some of our time-honored usages. If it be passed into law it will not only do violence to our religion, and religious rights and usages, but will do incalculable injury to our social organisation.

5. Complete disassociation of husbands and wives cannot take place under the present organisation of Hindu society in Bengal. All our social institutions must be upset, before wives could be altogether excluded from the company of their husbands. One of our most sacred ordinances is that 'a man must perform his religious rites accompanied by his wife.' If a man is married, the company of his wife becomes necessary for the performance of certain religious rites. If the present measure be passed into law, it will be expedient and wise for husbands to be kept apart from their wives, who are below the age of twelve, and the consequence will be that they will both be deprived of the benefit of the religious rites referred to above.

6. It is argued by certain advocates of 'reform' that what the proposed law requires is that a young couple, though carried through the religious observance of marriage, should not be allowed to live as *married* persons. But so far as Bengal is concerned, such restriction has become absolutely impossible. And, in fact, it is equally undesirable that the young couple should not live under the same paternal roof of their guardian. To avoid one danger of premature maternity from the prevailing usage of Bengali Hindu society, the young people would necessarily be exposed to very serious consequences of other kinds, were they compelled to avoid each other's company. Young husbands when forced into a bachelor life are often permanently ruined, and do irreparable injury to their wives, both morally and physically. A child-wife when left to the care of her parents and separated from her husband is sadly deprived of the educational influence of her father-in-law's family. A poor family cannot afford to let the young bride get confirmed in the ways of her parents' life belonging to a higher station. On the other hand, a rich family would object to keep her in the poverty to which her parents may have been born. When the child-wife has the misfortune to lose her parents she must be exposed to objectionable, not to say sinister, influences, unless she could be removed to the house of her husband's father. If, however, the youug couple are allowed to live as married persons, the prohibition required by the proposed law in respect of sexual indulgence, practically speaking, becomes impossible to be enforced; and if married life have to be forbidden, either other serious consequences will ensue, or the marriage itself will have to be deferred.

7. Apart from religious considerations, husbands and wives must take part in social ceremonies, under the present social system. If a man is married, however young the wife may be, she must assist her husband's household to perform all domestic ceremonies. These ceremonies really form an essential feature—and that an all-important one—of her education in our joint-family system. These ceremonies are numerous in a Hindu family, and the presence of the wife is absolutely necessary when they are celebrated. In joy and in sorrow, on festive occasions, and in time of mourning, the wife must be in the family, and reared to participate in the joy and sorrow of her husband, and of the other members of her husband's family. Whether these social institutions are good or bad, civilized or uncivilized, is a question which it is unnecessary to enter into. Suffice it to say that these institutions have crystallized into shape by the action of thousands of years, they hold the Hindu Society together in their present form, and to subvert, nay even to do violence to, them, will be to destroy Hindu Society altogether. This is a contingency which, my Committee submit, ought to be borne in mind in legislating upon questions bearing upon our religion and social institutions.

8. My Committee would beg to invite here the attention of His Excellency the Viceroy to a Resolution of the Government of India, dated the 8th of October, 1886. Speaking of the action which the Government thought it desirable to take regarding the proposals of Mr. Malabari for the abolition of "Infant Marriage" and "Enforced Widow-hood" in India, the Resolution says:—

"There is one common sense test which may often be applied with advantage in considering whether the State should or should not interfere in its legislative or executive capacity with social or religious questions of the kind now under notice. The test is: Can the State give effect to its commands by the ordinary machinery at its disposal? If not it is desirable that the State should abstain from making a rule which it cannot enforce without a departure from its usual practice or procedure.

"If this test be applied in the present case the reasons will be apparent why His Excellency in Council considers that interference by the State is undesirable, and that the reforms advocated by Mr. Malabari which affect the social customs of many races, with probably as many points of difference as of agreement, must be left to the improving influences of time and to the general operation of the mental and moral development of the people by the spread of education.

"It is true that the British Government in India has by its legislation set up a standard of morality independent of, and in some material respects differing from, the standard set up by caste, and it may be that the former standard has same beneficial effect in influencing native customs, practices and modes of thought. But legislation though it may be didactic in its effect, should not be undertaken for merely didactic purposes, and in the competition of influence between legislation on the one hand and caste or custom on the other, the condition of success on the part of the former is that the legislature should keep within its natural boundaries, and should not by overstepping those boundaries place itself in direct antagonism to social opinion."

Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of India, in the Home Department, Public, under date Simla, the 8th October, 1886.

9. Both the Hon'ble member in charge of the Bill and His Excellency the Viceroy have said that the effect of legislation in this matter will be "educative," that it will strengthen the hands of fathers of families for the protection of their daughters, and modify "custom so as to diminish the opportunities and incentives which are now afforded for indulgence" in the present practice. This so-called "educative" effect can only be brought about by a rigid enforcement of the law, the result of which will be the rigorous imprisonment or transportation of the offending husbands, and the unendurable widowhood of the wives during the life-time of their husbands. What should become of the wives, whose husbands should meet with punishment awarded by law, is a serious question, which should receive the most careful consideration of the Legislature. It is not in all cases that the child-wife, who had recklessly given her consent, would stand forth to give evidence of rape against her husband. And whether she or her relatives would so stand forth, or whether they would perjure themselves to save the husband from the consequences of a prosecution, the 'educative' effect of the law, when viewed in this connection, would be very lamentable. My Committee most respectfully point out, therefore, that both in the cases where the husbands are punished, and where they are acquitted, the consequences on the girls, for whose protection the law is intended, as well as on their families and the Hindu society generally, would be most disastrous. The constant attempt of all families will be to avoid the law in question, and the demoralisation thus caused might contribute to the commission of other crimes of a more heinous nature. If the 'educative' effects, which it is thought the Bill would produce, be weighed against its demoralising effects, the balance would be found not in favor of the former, but certainly on the side of the latter; and thus instead of producing any tangible good, the Bill would be productive of most lamentable consequences on Hindu society and on Hindu morals.

10. To avoid all these disastrous effects, the inevitable result of the proposed legislation will be to lead many honest people to give up the observance of child-marriage. The Hon'ble member in charge of the Bill admits that Hindu law enjoins, and the custom of many castes requires, that a girl should be given in marriage before she attains puberty. It is unnecessary, therefore, to dwell on the hardship which would be caused to the class of men referred to above. But when their case is compared with those of others who would rather break the law with impunity than forego their religious duties, the hardship in question must deserve the sympathy of the Legislature. My Committee think that those who would adhere to

*The term "puberty" is used for the first Catamenial flow.

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their custom at the risk of breaking the law, practically speaking, could not but escape with impunity. Even in a true case it would be impossible to establish the essential facts constituting the offence, unless medical examination of the girl be resorted to, and the law cannot compel a person against his, or her, will to submit himself, or herself, to such examination. That being so, the result would be that there might be prosecutions, but there could not be any conviction. Prosecutions followed by acquittal in cases of this description would arouse public sympathy to the keenest degree. The present Bill does not intend to interfere with the Hindu law regarding marriage before puberty, but restrains the husband from associating with his wife before the age of twelve. If association be prohibited, marriage must be prohibited also. One is a necessary consequence of the other. The two must be preserved or destroyed together. My Committee do not feel the slightest doubt that a fatal, though unintended, blow will be aimed at marriage before puberty, if the present measure be passed into law. Both His Excellency the Viceroy and the Hon'ble Sir Andrew Scoble have, however, distinctly declared that no such revolutionary change is contemplated by the Government, and my Committee feel assured that no such change is intended by the Legislature.

11. My Committee naturally inquire, where is the necessity for the proposed law? They at once admit the right and the duty of the State to interfere, for the protection of any class of its subjects, where *proved necessity* exists for such interference. But has this necessity been proved to exist? The law is intended, my Committee are told, "to afford protection to those who cannot protect themselves." The question which naturally arises here is, is not the present law sufficient for the purpose? Does not the existing criminal law provide adequate remedies for the evils contemplated by the present measure? The acts constituting offences, against which the measure in question is intended to give protection to child-wives, may be conveniently grouped under two classes: (1) those which would produce direct and *immediate* effects, and (2) those which would have *remote* effects. Under the first class may be conceived the offences of, (*a*) using criminal force, (*b*) hurt, (*c*) grievous hurt, and (*d*) causing death. The remedies for all these offences are given in the Penal Code. The question has been raised as to whether a husband has the absolute right to enjoy the person of his wife without regard to the question of safety to her. The framers of the Penal Code have also provided for offences of this nature. One of the Sections of the Code gives a remedy for causing hurt by an act which endangers life or the personal safety of others. In this manner, my Committee submit, all immediate injuries, the commission of which one can conceive of, on the person of females, have been adequately provided for in the existing law.

12. It is quite obvious that the offence, however serious when committed by a man of 30, becomes venial in a boy of 15. Indeed my Committee venture to express some doubt whether in the absence of bodily injury the misconduct of a girl of 11 and a boy of 13 should at all be taken cognisance of. In any case to indirectly punish the guardians of such offenders, through a criminal prosecution for rape, would be simply indefensible. My Committee think that the posecution itself would not only be a severe punishment to the accused, but to all the members of his family. In this connection, my Committee further desire to observe that the object of the Bill in question is to prevent consummation of marriage before puberty. The line should be drawn not at a particular age but a certain well-known point of physical development in a woman.

13. The question may be asked whether the Legislature is justified in initiating the present measure by frequent cases of undue exercise of marital rights, between the ages of ten or twelve? After a most careful inquiry my Committee have been unable to find any well-authenticated statistics that would support the view that the evil complained of is of frequent occurrence. My Committee have the most authentic testimony to the effect that such cases are rare, extemely rare, so much so that after a most patient search the advocates of "refom" have not been able to appeal to more than two or three doubtful cases —cases which could be easily dealt with adequately under the present law. This fact itself would prove that there is no necessity for the proposed law. The papers published in a recent issue of the *Gazette of India*, clearly show that no inquiry upon this point worth the name was made. They only show that in the opinion of certain persons the pernicious practice in question exists. But upon what materials they formed their opinion, and what enquiries they made before they formed that opinion, are not shown.

14. Among the acts, constituting offences, which may have *remote* personal consequences, injurious to the physical and moral well-being of the females, the following may be specified: (*a*) causing early maternity, (*b*) causing permanent injury to health in the form of general debility and exhaustion, (*c*) stimulating emotions and desires which would ultimately retard and destroy the growth of womanly and moral attributes and (*d*) physical weekness of children. Evils (*b*) and (*c*) are not confined to the suffering girl alone, they occur to men also and in all ages of life. There is a consensus of opinion among jurists that the ethical considerations under (*c*) are beyond the scope of penal legislation.

15. As regards the physiological grounds referred to above, the case is slightly different. If it could be shown beyond the possibility of a doubt that early maternity is an evil producing permanent injury to the health of females and that association with them between the ages of ten and twelve inevitably results in disastrous effects to their health, then the question assumes a serious aspect and well deserves the most anxious consideration of the Legislature. Up to the present time, however, medical testimony does not appear to be unanimous on this point. The question has been raised in connection with discussion on this subject: When should the State allow females to bear children? The answer given is, when they attain maturity. In defining maturity various contradictory answers are given by medical men of highest authority. Some would lay down a hard-and-fast line of age, while others would base their conclusions upon physical development, irrespective of any arbitrary limit of age. The mere fact of bearing children, say some, shows that the females have attained the required standard of maturity, while others are of opinion that childern may be borne even in a state of immaturity, productive of the most fatal consequences, both to the children and the mothers. My Committee do not feel competent to deal with these complicated and difficult physiological questions. It is for the Faculty to decide them first beyond the shadow of a doubt, and it is then for the Legislature to consider what action should be taken to provide a remedy for the evil. So long as this is not done, no legislative action can be based upon medical opinion which has not yet been well established. If, however, early maternity be not reckoned as an evil, physiological considerations founded upon the assumption cannot *a fortiori* find a place in discussions relating to the raising of the age of consent.

16. It has never been disputed that female children under the age of puberty are physically unfit for consummation of marriage, and that attainment of puberty may be taken as determining the appropriate age for such consummation. The misconceptions which have arisen regarding the proposed legislation may, to a great extent, be removed if these two propositions be kept constantly before the mind. All that the Hindu communities want, is that there may be no legal bar to the consummation of marriage which is absolutely enjoined by the *sastras*, when a girl attains puberty, and that according to the Hindu *sastras* a girl attains puberty at the first catamenial flow, be that at the age of eleven or twelve or upwards. It is true that works on Medical Jurisprudence refer to cases of abnormal appearance of this condition at comparatively lower ages. But my Committee think that the Legislature should not concern itself with these exceedingly rare cases of an abnormal nature. Consummation of marriage, when the wife attains puberty, is all that the Hindu *sastras* require, under a religious sanction of the most solemn character.

17. It will be seen from what my Committee have submitted above that there are already adequate remedies in the existing law for the offences producing *immediate* effects on the person of child-wives. With regard to acts producing *remote* effects, referred to in clause (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), and (*d*), in para II, my Committee have also attempted to point out that they are beyond the scope of penal legislation. Under such circumstances my Committee feel justified in submitting that the existing law is sufficient for the evils contemplated by the proposed measure, and that there is no necessity, in the present state of our knowledge, for the proposed amendment, in the interest of humanity.

18. The Hon'ble member in charge of the Bill is of opinion that the most objectionable character of the proposed measure will be taken away if the offence be made non-cognizable. "I propose," says he, "that offences by a man against his own wife under the amended section shall be non-cognizable, that is to say, that police officers may not arrest without warrant, but proceedings must be taken by summons, and bail may be accepted." This provision, my Committee regret to observe, would touch only the fringe of the objection based upon the inquisitorial character of the Bill in question. The fear which is entertained that the amendment of the law will lead to the invasion of the privacy of families by the police, will not be removed by making the offence non-cognizable. The Code of Criminal Procedure provides that a Magistrate may take cognisance of any offence; (*a*) upon receiving a complaint of facts which constitute such offence; (*b*) upon a police report of such facts, (*c*) upon information received from any person other than a police officer, or upon his own knowledge or suspicion, that such offence has been committed. This provision vests large discretionary powers in the Magistrate. Any information laid before a Magistrate, even if it be anonymous, may rouse his suspicion, and he may depute a *police officer* to make an enquiry. Persons who have any knowledge of the police are aware what fruitful source of harassment and black-mail this inquiry by a Magistrate may be made. By making the offence non-cognizable, for the interval of a few days alone police interference will be postponed. This will make little or no difference in regard to the objectionable character of the proposed measure. Where party or family feuds exist, a regular espionage system will be organised among neighbours, nay even in the bosom of the family, to bring the offending family into disgrace. The girl, or her parents, or the parents of her husband, and other relatives, both male and female, might be cited as witnesses. A Hindu female appearing as a witness in a Criminal Court in connection with such a charge as this, would be ruined for ever, and no amount of specious reasoning would be able to convince Hindus that what the law requires would be for their benefit.

19. My Committee would most respectfully point out that in matters of this description, where tender girls are concerned, the mere opening of a question of this nature will prove ruinous to child-wives, for whose protection the Bill is intended. Instead of doing any good, the Bill will greatly multiply the evil in this respect. The evil is not so grievous, as some European philanthropists, necessarily, unacquainted with the inner economy of our domestic life, may have been led to imagine. The oppression and the harrassment by the police will be simply intolerable, and be productive of incalculable mischief on Hindu society.

20. It may be observed here that none but the husband under the existing law can prosecute in a case of adultery. The reasons for this precaution are obvious, and the same reasons suggest that under the proposed law no proceedings should be allowed to be taken, unless on the complaint of the injured girl herself, or of the person, who would have been her legal guardian, had not the marriage taken place.

I have the honor to be,
Sir
Your most obedient Servant,
RAJKUMAR SARVADHIKARI,
Secretary, British Indian Association.

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION ROOMS,
18, *British Indian Street, Calcutta,*
6th February, 1891.

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